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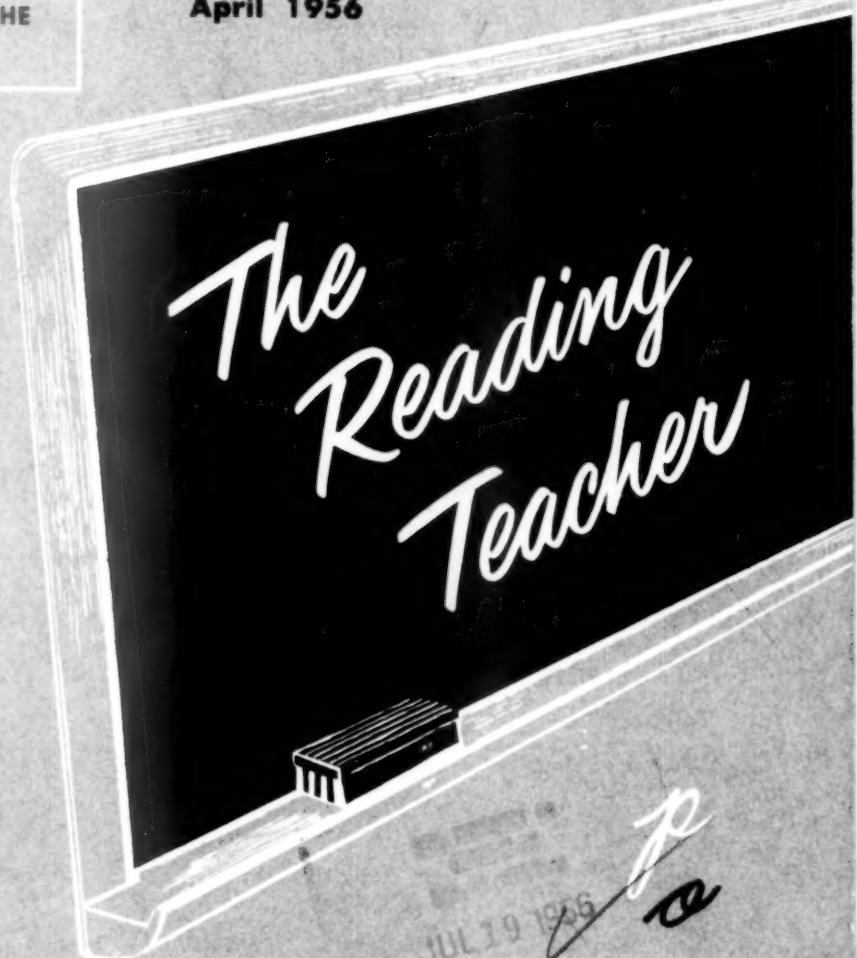
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1st Issue:

PROGRAM OF THE  
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April 1956

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Reading and the Gifted Child and Youth

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JUL -3 1956



# The Reading Teacher

Vol. 9, No. 4

April 1956

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## The Guest Editor's Introduction: *Reading and the Gifted Child*

THE importance of developing capable leaders for the present and the future is apparent to any student of contemporary life. Recently our attention has been directed repeatedly to the fact that many more gifted pupils must be led to follow careers in science if our leadership in this area is to be maintained. But we need also in the United States, more men and women of superior ability as leaders in business, education, journalism, labor, research, and government. Our gifted children constitute the nation's greatest potential resource to meet this need. To become effective leaders, however, they require appropriate educational opportunities and motivation.

### Who Are the Gifted?

After intelligence tests were developed and standardized, gifted children were defined and classified in accord with IQ's. This procedure helped greatly in locating one type of promising pupils. But the intelligence test does not enable us to identify all gifted children. Expression of ability is blocked in some by strong emotion or by insecurity. Moreover, there are children whose abilities in art, music, or writing are recognized best by their performance and by their products. Perhaps it is desirable to broaden our definition and to consider any child as gifted if his performance, in a potentially valuable line of human activity, is consistently remarkable. This criterion is being increasingly employed in planning curricula for the gifted.

Investigations reveal that the child of very high IQ usually excels in his school work. And he is typically modest and socially well-adjusted. Nevertheless, his general educational growth progresses at such a rapid rate that in the upper elementary school he has usually acquired knowledge and skills which surpass those of children classified two or three grades above him. Accordingly, he should be offered stimulating and challenging educational opportunities which are often lacking in large classes of elementary schools today.

### Neglect of the Gifted

Studies show that the neglect of gifted children starts in the primary grades and continues throughout the full range of formal education. Deprived of suitable educational opportunity, the gifted child frequently has little incentive to develop his abilities fully. For example, it has been pointed out that in many states half of the estimated number of gifted high school graduates fail to go to college. The National Manpower Council estimated in 1951 that one-fourth of our 18-year-old youth had IQ's of 110 or above. Of this fourth, 60 per cent did not enter college, and 20 per cent did not complete high school. Of the 40 per cent that entered college, only about one-half were graduated. Moreover, it has been found that only a percentage of gifted students take post graduate degrees and prepare themselves for careers in science and other important fields.

## Programs for the Gifted

During the past decade a renewed interest in the gifted has developed, and many programs for these pupils have been initiated in our cities. Examples, too, may be drawn from the work of regular classroom teachers who are attempting increasingly to extend and enrich the experience of the gifted.

### Enrichment Within Regular Classes and Counseling Services

One of the most practical ways of helping the gifted child is through reading. Related guidance procedures also play an important role.\* Again studies show that only a beginning has been made in directing the reading of the gifted child into individually appropriate and worthwhile areas. However, the gradual acceptance of a "developmental" approach in reading instruction and the increased use of "bibliotherapy" are resulting in benefits for the gifted as well as for other pupils. It has been found too that some gifted children do not acquire effective skills and many others fail to read widely and develop balanced patterns of reading. Efforts are being made to improve this situation in many schools. And in other schools, attempts are being made to lead gifted pupils to become independent and resourceful in selecting reading materials to satisfy their needs.

In this issue of *The Reading Teacher*, a number of articles contribute insights concerning reading instruction and guidance for the gifted pupil. An article by Eugene Klemm presents some recommendations based on his survey of gifted pupils in our schools. The account which follows by Walter B. Barbe and Thelma E. Williams describes some procedures used in stimulating critical and creative reading. The next article, by Ruth Strang, sets forth the reactions concerning reading by gifted pupils themselves. This account is followed by Phyllis Bland's description of a program for superior pupils who are poor readers. And Kay Welsh then describes some activities used in a regular English class to extend and enrich the reading experience of the superior junior high school student. In the next article, Samuel Weingarten discusses the use of books to help the bright junior college student understand his personal problems better and satisfy other "developmental needs" more successfully. The final article, by William Martin, recognizes a variety of gifts in children and sets forth some needs of children whose ability and interest in story-telling are great.

We hope that this issue of *The Reading Teacher* will prove of value to many teachers who are seeking help in guiding superior pupils. We hope too that this issue will stimulate other teachers to attempt to enrich the reading program for their superior students.

Paul Witty  
Guest Editor

\*Suggestions for studying the needs of gifted children are found in *Teacher's Guidance Handbook Part I "Identify Children Who Need Help"* by Jack Keough and Robert DeHoan, Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1955. See also Robert Havighurst, Eugene Stivers, and Robert F. DeHoan, *A Survey of the Education of Gifted Children*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Supplementary Educational Monograph No. 83, November, 1955. In the February 1956 issue of *The Nation's Schools*, the readers will find an interview on the gifted pupil which includes descriptions of research and developments.

## Improving Reading Instruction For Gifted Children

by EUGENE KLEMM

● EVANSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**G**IFTED CHILDREN are usually avid readers with superior reading abilities. They often read widely and for varied purposes. Consequently, the typical gifted child spends more time reading than do children with less ability.

There is evidence, however, that although gifted boys and girls as a group may be above average in reading ability, their actual achievements in reading and in other academic subjects may be well below their potentialities. Indeed, we must face the fact that because of the disparity between potentiality and achievement children with superior endowments actually may be a relatively retarded group in reading achievement. Such children, with high potentialities as measured by intelligence scales, may display reading abilities which are only average or even lower.

If we accept the premise that the gifted are often neglected in our schools then it is our responsibility as teachers to take steps to improve instruction and motivation. Unfortunately, comparatively few schools offer educational opportunities planned particularly for the gifted. Similarly, facilities and resources for teacher training, curriculum development, and financing are inadequate. Acceptance of and support for special education for the gifted by the public have lagged, and many educational admin-

istrators have found it impossible to venture far into this new field. As a result many teachers who wish to serve their superior pupils more adequately are seeking suggestions to incorporate in regular classroom programs in reading.

The writer made a study of reading programs in the elementary classrooms of thirty-seven cities in which facilities for the gifted had been reported<sup>1</sup>. Reports from more than sixty teachers and educators were received. This paper is based in large part on these data.

### I. Philosophy

The writer believes that reading programs in schools should be based on a developmental philosophy of education. This implies that every effort is made to enable pupils to achieve success from the start. Continuous progress is assured through the introduction of appropriate materials of many kinds at every level and the employment of constant evaluation and re-evaluation devices. Systematic instruction with definite highly motivated goals is provided by enthusiastic, competent teachers.

Such a philosophy often encounters obstacles when applied to reading instruction for the gifted since many gifted pupils are able to read when they enter school. Some have learned

<sup>1</sup>Eugene W. Klemm, *Reading Instruction for Gifted Children in the Elementary Grades*. Doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University, 1958.

independently. Others have had some instruction from their parents or relatives. They should not be held back in reading until their classmates are prepared, and it is of importance that these pupils be allowed to progress at their own rates of learning. They require experiences and opportunities in reading adapted to their needs.

## II. Class Size

Unless the size of the class is moderate the teacher may provide for rapid learning children only with considerable difficulty. But it is possible for her to employ grouping techniques and to individualize instruction so as to give some help to gifted pupils. First, it is essential for teachers to recognize gifted pupils accurately. Teachers will be helped greatly by specialists in psychometry, whose services are especially valuable in schools having very large classes. The expert classroom teacher often is skillful in identifying such children and in ascertaining their interests and needs. Such a teacher may find that many gifted children are ready at comparatively early ages to work individually; to prepare and to give reports, both oral and written; to organize and catalog information and materials; to write creatively and effectively both prose and poetry; and to share their experiences with their classmates. When these abilities find fulfillment, they enrich the class program.

## III. The Materials of Reading

Careful selection of reading materials is essential in providing more adequately for gifted pupils. Systematic

progress for each child may be planned through the utilization of basic textbooks accompanied by the use of supplementary texts, current periodicals and newspapers, reference books, and the wide use of library facilities. Gifted children should have comparative freedom and should be led to grow independent in selecting and using books. Teachers find that the gifted usually enjoy biography, and books about science, travel and adventure, and sports, and are interested in the study of words, in encyclopedias, and in the dictionary. Rapid learners are often concerned too about the origin of words and in the study of foreign languages. These interests offer opportunities for the classroom teacher to enrich the experiences of the gifted pupil.

When gifted children reach the middle grades, their reading abilities and interests have sometimes outgrown the resources of many elementary school libraries. Teachers and school librarians can help these pupils by securing books from the public library or by making arrangements for these bright young people to use the sections in public libraries which are normally reserved for adults. To provide satisfactory reading materials for preadolescent children who read at the level of average college freshmen is a problem to classroom teachers for they find, aside from factual materials, that the subject matter and writing in many books for young adults is unsuitable for children. However, the public library offers a splendid resource for gifted pupils, who as adolescents

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should be growing increasingly independent as book users.

Classroom teachers, too, have a responsibility in assisting gifted children with their leisure time reading. Some gifted children read haphazardly everything they can put their hands on; others pursue one subject of interest to the exclusion of everything else; some have activity programs which so completely occupy their time that they do little reading for pleasure; and some require assistance in developing tastes for wholesome reading. The co-operation of teachers, librarians, and parents is necessary to insure the development of *balanced*, wholesome leisure-time reading.

Gifted children are often eager to make reports to the class on their leisure-time reading. Evaluations (by the children themselves) may be made of the materials read and of the quality of the reports, for these pupils can become experts in evaluating their own progress toward the establishment of balanced and individually suitable reading programs.

#### IV. Guidance

The importance of the teacher as a counselor of superior pupils has been indicated in the planning of leisure time reading. Teachers of the gifted also need to be aware of interests of children with meager backgrounds of experience. Teachers should make rich use of community facilities and assist gifted children in learning how to utilize community facilities independently and wisely. Rapid learners are more inquisitive than other children and are eager to learn more facts

concerning such things as local governments, courts, radio and TV stations, newspapers, industries, construction and building, civic planning, art and music, historical associations, engineering and scientific experiments.

Some gifted children profit from the guidance of interested teachers who help in solving problems concerning the origins of things, in developing a philosophy of life and in gaining a realistic understanding of personal capabilities, potentialities, and limitations. Again, teachers find it helpful to work closely with parents, youth serving agencies, service clubs, and community leaders. In reading, gifted children often analyze the characters in books, sometimes identifying themselves with favorite characters, and thus gaining some insight and understanding of themselves.

#### V. Experiences in Democratic Living

Teachers find that gifted children are notably apt in learning to work, share, plan, and play together as leaders or members of a team, and as participating members in class clubs or groups. Some teachers utilize informal discussions to provide this type of experience. Others report success with comparatively highly organized classes which may be organized as a club, or city or state government agency with elected officers and rules of procedure. These children are able to organize and carry out units of this type with the teacher participating only as a guide during the meetings. Children are led to appreciate the

points of view and rights of others, to recognize the privileges of others, to accept responsibilities, and to express their opinions in a democratic manner.

The aim of the schools should be to obtain the maximum growth and development of each child. Reading programs based on knowledge of the na-

ture and needs of children; sound practices in guidance for children; co-operation between teachers and parents; and the adoption of well-established principles of reading instruction can do much to engender continuous growth in each pupil, including the gifted child.

• • •

## Developing Creative Thinking In Gifted Children Through the Reading Program

by WALTER B. BARBE

● UNIVERSITY OF CHATTANOOGA, and  
THELMA E. WILLIAMS  
HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE,  
SCHOOLS

OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE to teachers is the extent to which the gifted child differs from other children. Is his difference so great that he can not be taught effectively in the regular classroom? Are his needs so greatly different from other children that he will find little help in meeting them in the regular classroom? Unfortunately, the answers to these questions can not now be given with assurance. In some respects the gifted child does differ from other children, but in other ways he does not. Perhaps the only certain statement that can be made justifiably is that the gifted child is being neglected in many schools since merely leaving him to shift for himself, as is frequently the case, certainly is neglecting him. Even in those schools in which attempts are being made to provide more adequately for him, the efforts

are often spasmodic and generally unsatisfactory. It is the purpose of the writers to discuss this neglected phase of the reading program.

### What Is Creative Thinking?

The distinguishing characteristic of gifted children is their creativity. It is this creativity which classifies them as gifted. Creativity should not be limited to art, music, poetry and so forth. When the term creativity is used, one may think chiefly of productivity in the arts. Of equal importance is the ability to use ideas creatively, or to think creatively. It is this type of thinking which teachers may help develop in gifted children through the reading program. It may be developed through emphasis on the ability to understand and evaluate concepts without direct teaching.

Some of the skills in reading which may profitably be stressed include the following:

- Getting the main thoughts from reading selections.
- Differentiating what is important from the less important.
- Understanding inferred meanings.
- Relating one's own experience to the content.
- Analyzing critically what is read.
- Understanding subtleties.
- Recognizing one's own prejudices and biases, as well as those of the author.
- Appreciating conceptual presentations.

Perhaps all of the above items are only those skills which should be taught to every child. But they are skills which the gifted child, in particular, will be able to use effectively. No child should be deprived of the opportunity to learn these skills, but it is within the gifted group that the greatest success will be met in teaching them.

#### Use of Vicarious Experiences

Gifted children often enjoy vicarious experiences more than average children. They are better able to visualize situations, even those in which they have had no direct first-hand experience. The wise teacher will capitalize on this ability of gifted children.

Excessive emphasis on factual material may limit the thinking of gifted children. The gifted child will be able to go beyond the limitations set by factual presentations and create ideas

of his own. He will be able to use these ideas in such a manner that he can make original contributions, instead of merely repeating what he has heard or memorized.

Of course, through reading and writing the gifted child may have abundant opportunities for original reaction. Children's literature is breaking away more and more from the rigid bounds of "this actually happened to you." While *If I Ran the Zoo* certainly may be used effectively with gifted children in the primary grades, they have another even better treat in store for them in the recent Dr. Seuss' book, *On Beyond Zebra*. Many gifted children are discovering that Dr. Seuss really has an imagination. As one gifted child in the third grade recently said, "I wonder why I never thought of going beyond 'z' myself." If you haven't tried the Dr. Seuss books with gifted children (or with all children, as a matter of fact) you have been missing a delightful experience.

#### Gifted Have Areas of Weakness

Gifted children, as all children, have areas of weakness. They show considerable variability from task to task. And even those who are the best in some areas, are perhaps not even average in others. Gifted children should be led to understand that even though they may excel in the area of mental activity, there are other areas in which they may not be so good. They should be led to feel that they are a part of a group in which different contributions are to be expected from different individuals.

Merely having the gifted child work on those areas in which he does not excel is insufficient. Along with the "gift" of superior mental ability goes a responsibility. The gifted child must not only work on his areas of weakness, he must also develop to the utmost his areas of strength. It is in the development of these areas of strength that the teacher must encourage creative thinking. The gifted child may be effective in passing along information to others, but if his gifts are never used in such a way that he gives something original to the world, he has failed to make his greatest contribution. With each gift goes responsibility. The teacher must help the gifted child recognize his particular responsibility.

#### **Interests Must Be Developed**

While it is certainly true that gifted children have interests wider and deeper than average children, it remains for the teacher to develop the worthy interests into meaningful, lifelong pursuits. The superficiality of many interests is a characteristic of gifted children. Too scattered and varied interests may become actually a detriment to good adjustment later in life. Certain rather limiting decisions must be made by all people. The gifted child often must be helped to discriminate among his varied interests. Then he should be encouraged to intensify and extend some worthwhile and individually appropriate interests. If the teacher is able to develop genuine interests early in children, more opportunity is then given for development of these interests and the chance of the gifted child's actually making an original

contribution is greatly increased.

#### **Enrichment Is Important**

While it is certainly true that gifted children learn so rapidly that they often excel children several grades above them in their knowledge of skills, emphasis should be placed upon enrichment rather than acceleration. If the emphasis is on acceleration, the gifted child may have little time or opportunity to learn to think creatively. By being concerned instead with enrichment, the teacher has an opportunity to encourage creative thinking.

#### **How Creative Thinking Is Developed**

One of the most important practices which a teacher can follow in developing creative thinking in children is to do things herself which are creative. The teacher can do this only when she has a thorough knowledge of subject-matter and is well-prepared to present materials to the class. Perhaps in no other way than teaching by example can the teacher actually inspire creativity. A teacher who can do this is truly a good teacher. Gifted children especially will benefit from this type of teaching.

The following important considerations must be observed in encouraging creative thinking:

1. Merely allowing the child to repeat back in parrot fashion what he has read or heard, without evaluation or interpretation, lulls the gifted child into a false feeling of accomplishment. Certainly gifted children can memorize and repeat materials better than average children, but this is not the

type of attainment that should be expected from them. By allowing the gifted child to do only this, and praising him because he has performed better than others, his tendency to think creatively remains dormant.

If the question "why?" is frequently asked, the gifted child will often be helped. In this way he may get out of the habit of making such statements as, "I liked it," "it was interesting," or "isn't it good (or pretty, cute, nice, etc.)". Such nondescriptive words do little to tell what is meant. Both in written and oral expression the gifted child should be encouraged to express his feelings, not in the limited terms which so many of us use too often, but in exact and interesting ways. The habit of inquiring "why?" will lead him to examine causes and to think about statements.

In the reading clubs in the Major Work Classes of Cleveland, Ohio, where gifted children are placed for instruction in the skill subjects, emphasis is given to the child's feelings and interpretations, rather than to what he reads. How much better this is than the usual boring restatement of a story which everyone has already read.

2. An enjoyment of the process of reading as well as the results needs to be developed. For the child to be able to do creative thinking, he should enjoy the act of reading, writing, and thinking. The complaints that a child's

eyes hurt, or head hurts, or neck hurts when he reads too much are indications that either something physically is wrong with the child and should be corrected, or that the child does not enjoy the process of reading.

Once the child has learned to enjoy the process of reading, then he can learn to think creatively as he reads. Creative reading involves more than the acceptance of the author's statements as facts. It implies interpreting and analyzing what the author has said and then creating for one's self the ideas and reactions.

3. Only through an enriched curriculum can the teacher develop creative thinking. Strict regimentation does not create an atmosphere conducive to creative thinking. In order for children to think creatively, they must be encouraged to express themselves freely and not feel restrained because of fear of failure and ridicule. Enrichment includes the provision of an opportunity to express one's individuality in an atmosphere in which there is stimulation and challenge. When enrichment is offered, gifted children learn to think creatively without coercion.

Only if our gifted children are taught to think and act in a creative manner can they develop to their maximum. Through the reading program, the teacher has an opportunity to enrich the experience of the gifted child and help him to think creatively.

## Insights of Gifted Students About Reading

by RUTH STRANG\*

● TEACHERS COLLEGE  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

ONE OF THE CHARACTERISTICS of the gifted is their ability to analyze a situation. Their insights are keen and they express them with a directness that some of us adults have either lost or never possessed. We should, occasionally at least, listen to and learn from them. Even if their statements are not all scientifically accurate, it would still be important to know how they perceive the reading problem.

To obtain this introspective information, forty persons were interviewed on the following questions:

- When did you learn to read?
- How did you learn to read?
- What does reading mean to you —what value is it in your life? What need do you have for reading?
- What, if any, dissatisfactions do you have with your present reading?
- What do you think the school could do to help you read better?

The individuals answering these questions had IQ's over 130 and were of different age groups — elementary school, high school, college, and adults. Their socio-economic level was described as "middle class" or "above average." The interviews were taken down verbatim. These reports will be summarized and excerpts from them quoted.

\*With the assistance of students in the author's class on "Improvement of Reading in High School and College."

### Age of Learning to Read

A little more than half learned to read in the first grade, although some of these knew the alphabet earlier. The rest learned their first words at four or five years of age, except for two who reported reading separate words as early as three years.

The most common response was: "I learned to read in the first grade."

One boy modified this typical response by saying, "I learned to read a little before I started to first grade, and by the end of the first grade, I felt that I could read and get some meaning out of it."

A ten-year-old with an IQ of 151 said to his teacher, "What do you mean by that question (When did you learn to read?), Mr. B.? What kind of reading? Just sounds? Words or sentences? I'm not really too sure. I think I could read some words at three, maybe three and a half."

Dr. Terman and others have reported that nearly half of the verbally gifted children learn to read a little before they enter school. The others, with a very few exceptions, learn to read in the first grade. Some of them called the interviewer's attention to different concepts of reading. To some it might mean recognition of a few words and to others, various degrees of proficiency in getting the meaning.

### Methods of Beginning Reading

Gifted children learn to read by many different methods and combinations of methods. These vary with the age of the person reporting.

The largest number first acquired a basic vocabulary in various ways—through word charts, associating words with pictures, finding and remembering words in signs, stories, or poems read to them. After having acquired the basic words they began to read them in books and to learn to sound out the words they did not know. Some of the adults interviewed learned the alphabet first and mentioned spelling as an aid to reading.

A few excerpts from the interviews will illustrate various methods:

#### Phonic Approaches

"My teacher taught me the sounds of the letters and how some letters had funny sounds—like *gh* sounds like *f*."

"First I learned the alphabet; then I learned how to sound out each letter; then I tried real words. It didn't always work with words like *r-i-g-h-t*."

#### Word Method

"I was taught by sight-reading. I was given readers which associated objects with words, repeating the words often."

#### Combination of Word and Phonic Method

"Our teacher had charts with words which we memorized. Just before Christmas we learned to sound letters and words."

### Context Clues

"I learned to read at first by just learning a word and later on I could pronounce a word and get its meaning by what the rest of the sentence said. That is when my reading started helping me."

#### Through Spelling

"I learned to read through spelling. I caught on to spelling immediately and quickly associated the spelling with my elementary reader, *Friends and Neighbors*. My mother got me a library card and I started reading constantly."

One college man mentioned growing up in a reading atmosphere where "everybody's doing it." Several mentioned learning to read by picking out certain words in the books their parents read to them. One enjoyed finding the words she had learned in books or magazines.

In any group of gifted children there are usually several who say they learned to read by themselves. One ten-year-old described the process as follows: "Sometimes my mother or father would show me words. I remembered them. You might say I taught myself. I'm teaching my baby brother how to read now." Another older student said, "I really don't remember how I learned to read. There was no difficulty. It just happened. Reading to me is like breathing. It seems that I have always read."

According to their recollections of how they learned to read, many different methods "work." Research is

needed to ascertain whether a certain method is the most effective for gifted children.

### Values and Satisfactions

The values and satisfactions gifted persons find in reading vary with their age. Elementary school children most frequently mention reading to learn and reading for fun. An eight-year-old said, "I need reading so I can read the instructions for the work when our teacher doesn't tell us. I read stories at home. I'd be out of luck if I couldn't read."

A ten-year-old analyzed the values of reading comprehensively as follows: "Well, (pause) reading is a way of relaxation, of enjoyment. I need to get news of life, like the newspapers. I need to read for protection, to follow signs, like stop signs. I need it for instruction—to learn things—to increase my vocabulary."

High school students likewise mention the two main values for study and enjoyment. One fourteen-year-old girl in the ninth grade stated it in this way: "I love to read. I couldn't do any of the things in my present subjects if I didn't know how to read. I feel that reading is the most important thing you are taught in school because no matter what work you go into in later life, you'll never make it if you don't know how to read, and read well." A sixteen-year-old gave a more unique and comprehensive answer to the question of the value of reading: "An immediate escape from problems—a method of complete relaxation. It brings closer unfamiliar people and their way of life. It helps me socially—for example, etiquette books, party-

planning, sex education. I read to know what's going on in the world I live in."

College students are more likely to mention the vocational values of reading, as in the following quotation: "First I will earn my living by reading. It would be impossible to get the work I want without reading skill and impossible to have been educated as swiftly had I not been a fast and comprehensive reader." And another said: "One can't do anything without reading! Anyway, not the kind of job I'm doing."

Although several of these college students felt that they did not have time to read for enjoyment, others found various kinds of pleasure in reading: "To me reading means getting new experiences—I enjoy, I get pleasure, I get a great deal of knowledge." Another put it quaintly: "Reading satisfies the part of me that hasn't been developed yet."

Adults give still more varied responses. Some emphasize reading as a leisure-time activity; others as a professional necessity. A businessman explained: "Reading to me is functional. I use it only as a means for something else: newspaper to find out what is happening, directions as to how to do or where to go, whenever it will help me do my work more efficiently." In this older group there is more emphasis on reading for personal development as expressed in these quotations: "Reading is both vocation and avocation to me. It is both my professional interest and my spare time hobby. It is my prime source of intellectual and emotional development." "I can't

imagine life without reading. It represents a great deal of my communication and expression and the development of new ideas. It's one of the methods by which I get new ideas. It also serves as a method of entertainment for me."

At all ages, even during adolescence when so many other activities compete with reading, this group of gifted persons expressed enthusiasm for reading. From it they obtain personal satisfaction and stimulation, needed knowledge in their education or vocation, and enjoyment and relaxation.

#### Dissatisfactions with Their Reading

The large majority, especially of the younger age groups, answered this question on dissatisfaction by saying "None" or "Actually I am very satisfied with my reading."

Some thought they read too slowly. One eleven-year-old who started out by saying he would like to read faster, after reflecting added, "No, I'm not sure. I read fast enough when I want to. A lot of times I don't really want to read fast, like when you read science." An adult felt that he read too fast. It was hard for him to slow down for more weighty reading or to follow long and tedious reasoning. But more of the college students and adults were dissatisfied with their rate of reading, though several recognized that it was probably faster than other people's.

A few mentioned dissatisfaction with their vocabulary. "I need to know more words," said a ten-year-old. And a high school girl said, "Right now, I wish I had a few more words in my

vocabulary so I could pick up just about anything and read it."

A few others would like to read more widely. A high school boy admitted, "I only like certain types of books—historical novels and non-fiction." And a college student related failure to read widely with lack of time, heavy required reading, and slow reading—"I guess when I compare myself to others I read quite fast. But I would like to read faster; then I could read many more things."

In several cases their dissatisfaction was with the reading material. One high school student said, "I wish there were more books with settings in modern America—about contemporary situations and about the type of people one sees on the street." Another finds the required reading very boring.

The satisfaction with their reading expressed by these gifted persons may be based on a comparison with the reading of others and perhaps on a lack of recognition of what constitutes mature reading.

#### Advice to Schools

The answers to the question "What do you think the school could do to help you read better?" are in line with the characteristics of the gifted. They like to take initiative: "I like the idea of reading a lot on your own; you know, where you pick your own books." They would like to have more free periods for reading and less required homework so that they would have more time to read along the lines of their interest and for enjoyment. One fourteen-year-old boy thought students should be permitted to read

"trash" as well as "classical" books so that they would really see the differences between "good" and "bad" books. A college student put it this way: "Lessen the quantity of material I am compelled to read."

They have ability to analyze a situation, as did the twelve-year-old who said: "Reading seems to be neglected as you reach the middle grades in elementary school. Those deficient are denied the means by which to improve. In my opinion readings should be offered as a course in junior high—or at least included in the English course." Others felt that better instruction should be given in the lower grades. A college student showed keen insight with respect to reading instruction: "I guess I learned the fundamentals and then stopped. I can 'read' a piece of literature and not comprehend or care. If someone in high school had interested me in English—in construction of plots; excited me in the development of certain characters as shown by the words used; showed me how I could read to find out things that would have benefitted me, perhaps I should have done more guided non-academic reading."

They like to talk and suggest more group discussion of the books they have read.

The high school students also suggested instruction in certain skills: paragraph reading, vocabulary, and skimming. From sad experience one college sophomore said: "The schools should maintain more discipline in the classroom, so that students who wanted to learn would not be disturbed by

those who do not want to or cannot study." A fourteen-year-old girl said: "The only way the school can help is by having practice sessions in reading. Students should be tested for speed and then for understanding by giving them a certain amount of time to read and then answer questions. This should continue until the pupils have answered the questions satisfactorily."

They also recommend suitable material—"that's what they need," one college student wrote, "more materials geared to the interests of the children, and to begin where the reader is." The relation between reading proficiency and interesting material was expressed by a college student as follows: "I find that when the material doesn't keep my attention, my mind has a tendency to wander." Several also mentioned the need for guidance in the selection of reading materials.

In contrast with the replies of the gifted adolescents, the responses of a fourteen-year-old boy with an IQ of 74 to the same questions is interesting. He learned to read in the third grade "by writing the words a couple of times." He wants to be able to read the names of food in his store job. He said, "I'm ashamed to read, and that (special instruction) is what I need."

Introspective reports, observations, tests that lend themselves to the analysis of reading difficulties are ways of learning more about the reading of gifted persons—when and how they learn to read, why they read, what difficulties they encounter, and what kind of instructional program they would like to have.

## Helping Bright Students Who Read Poorly

by PHYLLIS BLAND

• EVANSTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

THROUGH NEWSPAPER REPORTS, feature magazine articles, the radio and TV, and books sometimes on the best-seller list, we are informed of our need for better schools and for more effective educational programs. Despite some conflicting opinions, there is rather general agreement between educators and laymen that the strength of tomorrow's citizenry depends upon our success in preparing superior children and youth to accept responsibility for leadership. There is evidence of a tragic neglect of these students in many school systems. Despite large size classes and unfavorable conditions which prevail in far too many schools, the high school teacher can often extend and enrich the opportunities of the gifted.

But it should be recognized that the modern high school often offers obstacles to the teacher who tries to extend or enrich the experiences of the gifted. Heavy enrollments, burdensome teaching schedules, inflexible courses of study, inadequate materials of instruction, committee assignments, frequent meetings, detailed record-keeping—all consume the time and effort of the teacher who would like to give more attention to gifted students.

The field of English offers an unusual opportunity for helping the superior student. The writer will describe some efforts to develop an enriched program for bright students with a

reading problem in the Evanston Township High School. The students include seven girls and five boys of high IQ and academic proficiency whose scores on reading tests were low.

In this article, the writer will describe three emphases used in her attempt to lead these bright pupils to read with greater understanding and pleasure. These include: — (1) the study of words, (2) guidance in reading critically and in interpreting various types of printed materials, and (3) efforts to improve the study skills essential in various fields including English.

### The Study of Words

In this program, the writer attempted to relate the study of vocabulary to worthwhile activities in listening, writing, and speaking. Fortunately, there was little difficulty in introducing this program to the bright student for he is capable, and eager to express himself in various ways. With this class of bright students, the writer attempted to follow these suggestions found in *Word Clues*<sup>1</sup>:

- Awaken an interest in words and a curiosity about their composition and history.
- Make familiar those Greek and Latin roots which are clues to the meaning of hundreds of un-

<sup>1</sup>Amsel Greene, *Word Clues*. Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson and Company, 1949, p. 12.

known or imperfectly understood English words.

- Correct and clarify misconceptions of the meanings of words of similar sound.
- Ensure a swifter and more accurate comprehension of what we read.
- Awaken a sensitivity to the latent values of words which enhance our appreciation of literary merit.
- Develop in our own writing and speech finer discrimination in the choice of words.

This type of word study created interest and curiosity about words, their origins, and their present functions. The students became greatly interested in the history of words—the fact that a word such as "school" originally meant "leisure" and that "focus" was derived from the Latin equivalent for "fireplace." The work then proceeded to include study of sources such as: *A Dictionary of Word Origins*<sup>2</sup>, *Word Origins*<sup>3</sup>, *Thereby Hangs a Tale*<sup>4</sup>, *More About Words*<sup>5</sup>, and *Picturesque Word Origins*<sup>6</sup>. Research which was rewarding for the bright student followed. Study of common roots helped him to understand the meaning of some words, and further study enabled him to appreciate the role of prefixes and suffixes in effecting meaning. Ma-

terials such as *Word Wealth*<sup>7</sup>, *Word Power Made Easy*<sup>8</sup>, *The Techniques of Reading*<sup>9</sup>, *A College Developmental Reading Manual*<sup>10</sup>, or *Word Clues*<sup>11</sup> offered practice which was correlated with other interesting activities in language investigation. For example, word "hunts" were used to build dictionary skills. The relationships between words such as *generous*, *eugenics*, *psychogenetic*, *congenital*, and *generation* were brought out. Flash cards, puzzles, tape records, and other devices were used to heighten the students' interest in words.

It is illuminating to study the recent growth and change in language<sup>12</sup> traceable to the following causes:

- Borrowing from foreign languages: *Blitzkrieg*, *flak*, *luftwaffe*, *panzer*, *samba*, and *cantata*.
- Duplicating sounds: *bebop*, *walkie-talkie*, *boogie-woogie*, *peepie-creepie* (for a portable TV camera).
- Generalizing from trade names: *frigidaire*, *deep freeze*, *polaroid*, *nylon*, *orlon*, *arilan*, *cellophane*, *celotex*.
- Shortening well-known terms: *H-bomb*, *jet*, *polio*, *WAC*, *WAVE*, *SPAR*, *CARE*, *DDT*, *UNESCO*, and *VIP*.

<sup>7</sup>Ward S. Miller, *Word Wealth*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1939.

<sup>8</sup>Norman Lewis, *Word Power Made Easy*. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1949.

<sup>9</sup>H. Judson and K. Baldridge, *The Techniques of Reading*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1954.

<sup>10</sup>V. Wilkins and R. Webster, *A College Developmental Reading Manual*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948.

<sup>11</sup>Op. Cit. 1.

<sup>12</sup>Margaret Bryant, "Research in the English Language". *The Bulletin for the National Association of Secondary-School Principals*, Vol. 39 (September 1955), pp. 116-125.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph T. Shipley, *A Dictionary of Word Origins*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1945.

<sup>3</sup>Wilfred Funk, *Word Origins*. New York: Wilfred Funk, Inc., 1950.

<sup>4</sup>Charles E. Funk, *Thereby Hangs a Tale*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948.

<sup>5</sup>Margaret S. Ernest, *More About Words*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951.

<sup>6</sup>Margaret S. Ernest, *Picturesque Word Origins*. Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1938.

- Describing scientific developments: *cyclotron*, *aureomycin*, *penicillin*, *antihistamine*, *nucleonics*, *psycho-surgery*.
- Telescoping two words into one: *smog* (for smoke and fog), *brunch* (for breakfast and lunch), *motel* (for motorist and hotel).
- Translating abbreviations into sounds: *MC* to *emcee*, *VP* to *veep*, *GP* (general purpose car) to *jeep*, *CB* (member of the U. S. Construction Battalion) to *Seabee*.

High school students are sometimes surprised to learn that the past generations, including their parents, contributed to our language with words such as *jog*, *tops*, or *dude*. Today's teen-talk, they come to realize, is just another part of the changing language. Students read with interest an item in *Time* entitled, "Far-Out Words for Cats," which shows that teenagers are creating a "jazz lingo" with the same enthusiasm that they are supporting a multi-million dollar recording business. *Time* points out that the terms currently used by the younger set include *ball* (good time), *cool* (relax), *dig* (understand or appreciate), or *hip* (in-the-know), and *on* (addicted to dope). These and other picturesque expressions permit the students to bring the teacher up-to-date on language change. This type of word study serves to enhance the bright students' interest in words.

One of the chief phases of this work with bright students is an emphasis on the varied meanings of words and the

importance of conceptual terms. Paul Witty<sup>13</sup>, or Northwestern University, points out that the science of semantics has resulted in a "renewed emphasis on vocabulary and has focused attention upon the way context affects meaning." He also states that the development in pupils of a clear understanding of words which have no direct referents is one of the most difficult tasks confronting teachers and that "these words form the 'core' of the vocabulary in the social studies. Difficulty with these words frequently precludes communication, creates confusion, and actually may lead to serious misunderstanding or emotional disturbance. A soundly conceived reading program makes provision for the mastery of conceptual terms by offering students an opportunity to discover their meaning through investigation, discussion, and critical study." As the students gain in appreciation of the importance of words and their meanings, they are led to see that:

- Words are not the *things* they stand for.
- Words which classify often overlook the common characteristics of the things they separate.
- Words have relative value and must denote degree of value to give a clear concept.
- There is a difference between report and judgment as well as between report and inference.
- It is desirable and interesting to evaluate figures of speech.

<sup>13</sup>Paul Witty, "An Articulated Program for Teaching Reading Skills from Kindergarten to College", *The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals*, Vol. 39 (September 1955), p. 10.

The students soon discover that the daily newspapers and TV and radio programs may become teaching aids which can be profitably studied in terms of principles set forth in: *Language in Thought and Action*<sup>14</sup>, *Tyranny of Words*<sup>15</sup>, *Language Habits in Human Affairs*<sup>16</sup>, *Words and What They Do To You*<sup>17</sup>, and *Language Power for Youth*<sup>18</sup>.

### Interpretative and Critical Reading

*Interpretative Reading.* An appreciation of the basic principles of semantics often stimulates the superior student to read critically without sacrificing aesthetic enjoyment of literature. His observations lead him to differentiate figures of speech which distort meaning from those which enhance meaning. Thus the students avoid the common error of searching for literal meaning in figurative expressions. Attention is directed increasingly by them to the author's purpose, style, or symbolic presentation. Gradually they became so much interested in figurative speech that they are helped greatly in reading many selections. For example, the drama of *Macbeth* is often unrealized because figurative speech or unfamiliar vocabulary preclude understanding. Thus, students who read the following passage with appreciation of its figurative language are enabled to comprehend its mean-

ing and are interested more fully:

*But screw your courage to the sticking place,  
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep—  
Whereto rather shall his day's hard journey  
Soundly invite him—his two chamberlains  
Will I with wine and wassail so convince  
That memory, the warden of the brain,  
Shall be fume, and the receipt of reason,  
A limebeck only; when in swinish sleep  
There drenched natures lie as in death,  
What cannot you and I perform upon  
The unguarded Duncan? What not put upon  
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt  
Of our great quell.*

Stephen Vincent Binet's *John Brown's Body*, which contains much figurative prose, is another required reading in many senior high schools. The colorful portrait of Abraham Lincoln is an example:

*Lincoln, six feet one in his stocking feet,  
The lank man, knotty and tough as a hickory rail,  
Whose hands are always too big for white kid gloves,  
Whose wit was a coon skin sack of dry, tall tales,  
Whose face was homely as a plowed field.*

<sup>14</sup>Hayakawa, *Language in Thought and Action*. New York: Harcourt and Brace Co., 1949.

<sup>15</sup>Stewart Chase, *The Tyranny of Words*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938.

<sup>16</sup>Irving Lee, *Language Habits in Human Affairs*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1941.

<sup>17</sup>Catherine Mintier, *Words and What They Do To You*. Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson and Company, 1958.

<sup>18</sup>Cleveland Thomas, *Language Power for Youth*. New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, Inc., 1955.

Poetry such as Robert Frost's *The Mending Wall* offers further opportunities to stimulate the superior students to recognize and interpret symbolism:

*Before I built a wall I'd ask to know  
What I was walling in or wally out,  
And to whom I was like to give  
offense.*  
*Something there is that doesn't love  
a wall,  
That wants it down. I could say  
'elves' to him*  
*But it's not elves exactly, and I'd  
rather*  
*He said it for himself. I see him  
there*  
*Bringing a stone grasped firmly by  
the top*  
*In each hand, like an old-stone sav-  
age armed,*  
*He moves in darkness as it seems to  
me*  
*Not of woods only and the shades  
of trees.*  
*He will not go behind his father's  
saying,*  
*And he likes having thought of it  
so well*  
*He says again, 'Good fences make  
good neighbors.'*

The bright student is capable of responding to the subtleties of good literature through:—(1) recognizing quickly the author's purpose; (2) understanding inferences; (3) anticipating outcomes; and (4) analyzing the author's style. Universities report that these skills are lacking in many capable students and they encourage the high school administrator to offer college level and honor courses to pro-

vide a better foundation for scholarly endeavor. Such classes have been offered successfully in the Evanston Township High School. Herein, the able students' course-of-study has been enriched in the junior and senior years to enable him to develop a more mature appreciation of literature.

*Critical Reading.* An emphasis on critical reading encourages the bright student to develop an inquiring attitude toward the ideas presented by the author and to pass judgment based on logical thinking. This leads the student often to read widely in order to consider questions such as:

- What is the purpose of the author?
- Is there a logical development of the basic ideas?
- Are the arguments and evidence adequate to justify the conclusions?
- Is the presentation well documented?
- Are propaganda devices used?
- What inferences and implications can be derived from the reading?
- What are the viewpoints of other authors on the same topics?

#### Study-Type Reading

The bright student's ability to learn rapidly does not always assure success in school or lead him to develop skills in study-type reading. Without the challenge of an enriched curriculum, the rapid learner may acquire many inefficient study habits. He often needs guidance and practice in developing these skills. Evanston Township High School's six-week reading workshop

for the college-bound student provides practice in study-type reading from materials such as: *Studying Effectively*<sup>19</sup>, *The Techniques of Reading*<sup>20</sup>, *Efficient Reading*<sup>21</sup>, *Study-type Exercises-College Level*<sup>22</sup>, and *A College Developmental Reading Manual*<sup>23</sup>. *How To Become a Better Reader*<sup>24</sup> is used as a basic text and much time is devoted to the discussion of how to concentrate, take effective notes, and prepare for examinations. Students are encouraged to develop flexible reading skills in order to understand the purpose of different assignments and to lose a fear of examinations, which they sometimes exhibit. In addition to the three phases of the program for the superior student described, there is an effort to provide wide reading for each student in accord with his interests. Opportunities are offered the superior student to read many biographies, to explore in the field of science, and to become familiar with the varied source materials necessary in many projects. The program recognizes the importance of reading from many sources and in many fields in order to satisfy the interests of bright students and to enable them to develop individually appropriate reading patterns. The reading of poetry, drama, and other types of written expression proves rewarding, too.

19G. Wrenn and R. Larsen, *Studying Effectively*. Stanford University Press, 1941.

20Op. Cit. 10.

21James Brown, *Efficient Reading*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1952.

22Ruth Strang, *Study-Type Exercises*, College Level. New York: Bureau of Publications Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1951.

23V. Wilking and R. Webster, *A College Developmental Reading Manual*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948.

24Paul Wittry, *How to Become a Better Reader*. Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1958.

Since enrollment in the high school is expected to increase greatly within the next few years, the problem of enriching the bright students' reading programs is going to be difficult. The three points emphasized in this paper: (1) study of words; (2) guidance in interpretative and critical reading; and (3) practice in study-type reading are steps toward enrichment. But it will require time and effort on the part of capable teachers, and administrative planning and support to care adequately for the gifted in the years ahead.

#### Syracuse University Announces Symposium

Syracuse University will sponsor its second annual Symposium in Reading from August 13 to August 24. The theme of the 1956 Symposium is Improving Reading in the All-School Developmental Program.

Inquiries about the Symposium should be addressed to:

Margaret J. Early, Assistant Director,  
Reading Laboratory, Syracuse University,  
Syracuse 10, New York.

#### Cornell University Announces Reading Conference and Workshop

Cornell University's Second Annual Reading Conference and Workshop will be held in the air-conditioned Little Theatre on Campus from July 23 to August 10. The purpose of the Conference and Workshop will be to give participants some practical "know how" which they can take back to their classrooms.

For those who would like a six weeks course, the Department of Child Development and Family Relations has planned a three-week Workshop in Creative Arts for Children to precede the Reading Conference.

Write the Director of the Summer Session, 356 Day Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, for further information.

## Reading for the Bright Pupil In the Junior High School

by KATHRYN WELSH  
● GARY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"THE MORE THINGS I learn, the more books there are to read about them. The more books I read, the more things I find out there are to learn." These are words of wisdom of a boy mentioned in *Language Arts for Today's Children*<sup>1</sup>.

What are we going to do for this pupil, as well as for his many friends, whom we recognize as gifted? It has been established that IQ tests do not always enable teachers to identify all gifted or bright children. According to Paul Witty, of Northwestern University, we may consider any child gifted whose performance, in a potentially valuable line of human activity, is consistently remarkable. Teachers need to concern themselves with all types of gifted children and to make adequate provisions for their intellectual growth and development.

Our school system today is predicated on the democratic theory that we are educating "all the children of all the people." Each pupil in our democracy is entitled to develop to the limit of his capacities. If we, as teachers, are to help bright pupils achieve this goal, then it is our responsibility to try to recognize talents and abilities of various kinds in our pupils.

### Some Characteristics of Bright Pupils

We should note the fact that exceptional children fall into many categories. The term "gifted" is similarly used to refer to several groups. One is the group of children superior in verbal ability, pupils with IQ's 120 or 130 and above. These pupils usually have excellent vocabularies, varied interests, and display good physical and mental health. Nevertheless, gifted children differ greatly as to their nature and needs. The teacher who is working with such pupils needs to help them make the most of their strengths. And, in those cases in which limitations are found, help should be given to enable them to overcome weaknesses and attain wholesome development.

The teacher should help each pupil find books that will satisfy his personal and social needs and form a part of an individually suitable and varied reading pattern. Each pupil requires guidance in finding books to satisfy his interests, too. The use of diversified reading materials based on his interest in science, art, biography, or in some other field will aid him in many ways. Guided reading may help him in choosing his vocation or in making the most of his leisure.

"Think more about means whereby the gifted child can be given special

<sup>1</sup>*Language Arts for Today's Children*, prepared by the Commission on the English Curriculum, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., P. 150.

opportunities," Grayson Kirk, president of Columbia University, told the NEA during the past June convention. "Unless able men lead us, unable men will." The classroom teacher needs to recognize that the bright child has the same needs as every other child and that these needs can often be met through reading. The teacher should recognize the important place that reading may assume in helping the gifted develop leadership qualities.

### Planning a Balanced Reading Program

In planning a balanced reading program for bright students, the teacher will study her pupils carefully. In her efforts, she will use several methods each semester—an interest inventory, a personal interview, or an essay by the student in autobiographical form. Records of activities, hobbies, sports, movies, and TV interests will be kept so that suitable books and materials may be suggested for each pupil. If we are to help our bright pupils prepare for leadership, we need to know a great deal about each of them.

An effective reading program fosters well-rounded development of each gifted pupil. The exceptionally bright child should be encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities, such as, student government, assembly programs, clubs, publication work, and cooperative planning. Each of these activities should be chosen by the pupils themselves in accord with their interests.

The interests and activities of the gifted pupil should be associated with reading materials of appropriate diffi-

culties. As Stella A. Center, former director of the Reading Institute of New York University, states: "If a reader becomes intellectually and emotionally identified with what he reads, he experiences an expansion and fulfillment of his powers, provided the printed page tells the truth about life. If the reader senses literature as human experience, no power can prevent his being stimulated by it." Reading can indeed provide rich and varied experiences vicariously.

### Case Studies Are Listed

John C. was a pupil in my classes last year. From his previous school records, it was not difficult to identify him as a gifted pupil. He was, however, not too fond of reading. From a series of interviews and from themes he wrote in class, I learned a great deal about him. Such compositions as *The House I Live In*, *The Street I Live On*, *The Friends I Have*, *The Programs (Movie, TV) I Enjoy*, *My Favorite Sport*, *My Best Hobby* were used as sources of information about this boy, who was shy, quiet, reserved, and very bright. His withdrawal from his group presented a problem at times. John's brother excelled in sports, and John began to share his brother's enthusiasm by reading sport stories. John soon became very much interested in sport stories and related materials. The next step was to invite him to become a member of the publication staff. His knowledge of current sports and his superior writing ability qualified him to serve as sports editor of his school's annual. Gradually he became an enthusiastic contributing

member of various groups. John is an example of a bright pupil who gained help from literature in building an ideal of self. Teachers who work with gifted children will find that the approach to reading through a consideration of interest and need will prove rewarding. They will recognize, too, the importance of associating reading with other activities. Thus, working on the school publication has done much for John. His writing, his association with fellow students, and his increased awareness of life about him are all helping him gain insight into himself and his needs.

Good literature offers satisfactions for emotional needs and outlets for strong feeling. It often helps pupils understand themselves better and it aids them in understanding their social environment. It is obvious, that the bright pupil should be introduced to stories of men and women whose lives have been motivated by high purpose and who have served their communities well. Such reading affords opportunities for the young person to appreciate the vision of people, such as, George Washington Carver, Madame Curie, Albert Schweitzer, Florence Nightingale, Helen Keller, Abraham Lincoln, and a host of other individuals whose lives of service to mankind are inspiring.

An effort should be made to help the bright pupil become independent in choosing reading materials to satisfy his purposes. If he appreciates the purpose of his reading, he will often read more willingly and more critically. To satisfy his needs, the bright pupil should be encouraged to read in

various fields and to employ materials of various kinds including biographies, short stories, poetry, and narratives.

Judy A., age 15, is in junior high school. She told this interesting anecdote about herself. When she was enrolled in kindergarten she was most unhappy and cried much and often. The teacher suggested that she be put in first grade. As soon as she was promoted to this more congenial group she began to like school. She had been able to read before she entered school. She now became interested again in books. Her remarkable vocabulary and varied interests soon attracted attention. Her unusual interests offered a fine basis on which to build further reading experiences. Her interest in books continued into high school. On one occasion, she chose *Giants in the Earth*<sup>1</sup> and made authentic costumes in the 1870 tradition for dolls. Then she began to read intensively in the field of historical fiction of the post Civil War period. Judy's reading aided her in making personal and social adjustments. Her interest in dressing dolls to represent periods in history continued. She now wants to become a fashion designer and there is no doubt that her reading may assist her in attaining this goal.

#### **Well-Adjusted, Trained Teachers Are Necessary**

The bright pupil needs, as does every pupil, the kind of teacher who is reasonably well-adjusted and who has had training in child psychology and child development, as well as in

<sup>1</sup>O. E. Rolvaag, *Giants in the Earth*. New York: Harper Brothers, 1927.

the field of literature. Such a teacher will recognize the importance of knowing each pupil, understanding him and helping him grow. Teachers can best provide for the gifted pupil by giving him:

- Varied outlets for expression and development of interests.
- An enriched curriculum.
- Purpose for his reading.
- A wholesome classroom atmosphere in which each pupil feels secure.

Such a program for the gifted child implies that the teacher will be a well-informed person, who reads widely and finds satisfaction in books. Such a teacher not only reads in accord with her own interests, but also reads many books designed for young people.

Purposes and needs should govern the selection of materials for reading at all levels. The teacher, to be effective, must be acquainted with the literature her students are reading, as well as with the literature she may want to use in guiding them into the best use of books. There are doubtless many methods by which a teacher can become acquainted with teen-age literature; one of the best is to make a record on 3 x 5 inch index cards of books read. From these cards an annotated card-file index can be made to be used for reference when a teacher is in search of a particular book to assist a pupil having a definite problem.

#### Objectives Must Be Kept In Mind

It is necessary for the teacher to keep in mind several objectives in choosing materials for the bright pupil:

such materials must suit his varied needs, interests, and abilities; they must help him in his academic progress; they must aid him in his personal and social adjustments; and they must also provide enjoyment.

After acquainting herself with many types of literature, the teacher will be better prepared to choose worthwhile reading materials and to make suggestions of appropriate books to be read by her pupils. To do this, she must be a fairly competent judge of the merit of books.

One of the reasons bright students sometimes lack interest in reading is that materials are sometimes too difficult or unsuitable in terms of interests. Materials are now available that are attractive in format and illustrations, and are appealing to youth. Never before have there been so many well-written, beautifully illustrated, and attractively bound books created for students. Many book companies as well as professional organizations periodically furnish the teacher with up-to-date book lists, in which the books are annotated according to interests, subject matter, and types.

One of the best sources of information about books is Lenrow's *Reader's Guide to Prose Fiction*<sup>2</sup>, which provides topically classified and well-annotated lists of fiction. The American Library Association's magazine, *Book List*, is also an excellent guide for the teacher who wishes to provide her classes with varied new materials. This publication selects, classifies, and describes 100 to 125 new books in each

<sup>2</sup>Elbert Lenrow, *Reader's Guide to Prose Fiction*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1940.

issue. Many English teachers are members of the National Council of Teachers of English. This organization has an official publication, *The English Journal*, a magazine which is helpful to teachers; the section on *Brief Reviews* is especially useful. The Council also has available for its members several lists of selected books which can be purchased for small sums.

The teacher of the bright child has an unusual opportunity to extend each child's horizon and enrich his life by introducing him to the values and satisfactions to be found in books. Such effort is rewarding indeed, not only to the pupil, but also to the teacher who will find her own satisfactions greatly enhanced and deepened through this endeavor.

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## Reading Can Help Gifted Adolescents

by SAMUEL WEINGARTEN

● CHICAGO CITY JUNIOR COLLEGE

THE BRIDGE from childhood to adulthood is marked by many hazards; it is perhaps remarkable that such a large number of young people make the transition without major conflicts in personality adjustment. Some of these hazards have existed through the ages and in various cultures; others are the results of characteristics of our society or of the biological, emotional, or intellectual qualities of the individual. Frank has enumerated some adjustments the maturing youth must now make:

Each child must in some manner adjust to the role of being a man or a woman; must attempt to emerge from the status of an obedient, dependent child to that of a responsive, self-directing adult member of society; and finally must come to terms with the contemporary social life and meet the various re-

quirements and expectations of both his age group and older adults<sup>1</sup>.

### Major Needs Must Be Known

The problems and needs of adolescent youth have been variously designated by workers in adolescent psychology. Bettelheim has considered the problems of the adolescent as three: (1) the biological dilemma — assertion of sexual drives during adolescence *vs.* social disapproval; (2) the emotional dilemma—need for independence *vs.* control by adults; (3) cultural dilemma—need for understanding and appreciation; need for assurance that he will succeed in making a place for himself in society as an adult<sup>2</sup>. A Progressive Education Asso-

<sup>1</sup>Lawrence K. Frank, "Adolescence As a Period of Transition." The Forty-Third Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education: Part I, *Adolescence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Bruno Bettelheim, "The Social Science Teacher and the Emotional Needs of Adolescents." *The School Review*, LVI (December, 1948), p. 586.

ciation committee concluded that the following are the major needs of the adolescent: (1) to believe himself acceptable to his peers; (2) to establish close friendships with at least one or two members of his own sex; (3) to establish satisfying attitudes toward relationships with the opposite sex; (4) to become increasingly emancipated from family control and at the same time to retain parental affection and support<sup>3</sup>.

The following "problems of great concern" were found in a group of one hundred and twenty three young people attending a metropolitan junior college<sup>4</sup>: (1) *Relations with Age Mates*—almost 22 per cent had difficulty in establishing satisfactory relations with the opposite sex; 35.7 per cent found moral standards hard to maintain and still be a part of the group; (2) *Emotional Independence from Parents*—20.3 per cent considered their parents too dominant; 45.5 per cent had difficulty in breaking family ties to gain a feeling of independence; 28.4 per cent had parents who resented their changes in attitude toward religion, politics, and a choice of career; (3) *Building Conscious Values*—42.2 per cent were puzzled because of conflicting religious beliefs encountered; 26 per cent were uncertain as to how religion might be worked into everyday life; 40.6 percent were un-

able to develop a philosophy of life; (4) *Achieving Assurance of Economic Independence and Selecting and Preparing for a Vocation*—32 per cent did not know how to prepare for a vocation in which success was probable.

### Self-insight and Understanding Aid Youth

Analysts of the needs and problems of adolescents agree that a most effective instrument for aiding young people in their quandaries is self-insight and understanding. Frank believed that the following insights and understandings would be of value to youth in helping them solve their problems:

- An understanding that their concerns and problems are shared by other adolescents, that other age mates have the same anxieties.
- An understanding of why parents resent the independence which adolescents are seeking.
- An interpretation of their unrecognized needs for reassurance, love and affection, when they are discouraged or defeated.
- Clarification of their roles, their aspirations, their image of self, their level of aspiration.
- Acceptance of self without guilt or anxiety; accepting and respecting themselves<sup>5</sup>.

Bettelheim pointed to "intellectual understanding" as the tool with which the adolescent can successfully master his dilemmas; such understanding can

<sup>3</sup>Lois Hayden Meek (Chairman), *The Personal-Social Development of Boys and Girls with Implications for Secondary Education* (New York: Committee on Workshops, Progressive Education Association, 1940), p. 184.

<sup>4</sup>Use was made of a questionnaire devised by O. B. Douglas and Lucile Rack. For their conclusions on a survey of 1956 junior college students in Texas see their articles, "Problems of Junior College Students," *Junior College Journal*, XX (March, 1950), 377-389; XX (April, 1950), 437-452.

<sup>5</sup>Lawrence K. Frank, "This Is the Adolescent," *Understanding the Child*, XVIII (June, 1949), 65-69 *passim*.

give him "the prestige and strength of ego that he badly needs."<sup>6</sup>

In a survey study of 1256 adolescents and young adults<sup>7</sup>, it was found that young people can attain understanding of themselves, gratification in a worthy concept of the self, recognition of an ideal person suitable for emulation, understanding of other people's motivations, awareness of other people's solutions to their problems, realization that their own problems are not unique, perspective on their problems and suggestions for solutions. The tool for the attainment of these insights and understandings was books, in the reading of which the readers identified with situations comparable to their own and with characters who suggested themselves.

#### **Superior Mental Health Creates Adjustment Problems**

Gifted youth share with other youth the problems of adolescence. Moreover, because of their high intelligence or their creative abilities they often have problems not common to their less endowed peers. On the whole, they are superior in mental health and adjustment, but their superiority frequently creates problems which do not trouble less gifted youth at all or which are less acute for them. Strang considered the areas of "social relations" and "meeting frustrations constructively" the ones in which gifted per-

sons are most likely to fail<sup>8</sup>.

Superior mental ability in the gifted adolescent may cause him to rebel strongly against what seem to him irrational and unjustifiable family restraints and prohibitions. His probing intellect may lead him to search for explanations that will enable him to see life whole and steady. His mature tastes and interests may divorce him from his less advanced age peers and school associates; he may therefore have a sense of isolation. His failure to excel in the popular activities of his intellectually or artistically gifted associates may give him feelings of inferiority. As an accelerated student in school, he may believe he is socially inadequate in associating with older adolescents.

But the gifted adolescent possesses to a marked degree the tool which can aid him in the solution of problems produced by his brightness. His intelligence can aid him in analyzing and understanding the elements of his dilemma; he has the capacity for self-diagnosis and consequently can attain the first step toward finding solutions to his problems. Since self-help is the best help, the gifted adolescent needs only initial guidance in finding the road to personality adjustment and social orientation.

#### **Superior Students Have Strong Interest in Books**

Another important possession of the gifted adolescent is his ability to read and his interest in reading. Witty has

<sup>6</sup>Bettelheim, *op. cit.*, p. 585.

<sup>7</sup>For a complete report on this survey see Samuel Weingarten, "Developmental Values in Voluntary Reading," *The School Review*, LXII (April, 1954), 222-230. For a discussion of a special aspect of the inquiry see Samuel Weingarten, "Reading as a Source of the Ideal Self," *The Reading Teacher*, VIII (February, 1955), 159-164.

<sup>8</sup>Ruth Strang, "Mental Hygiene of Gifted Children," *The Gifted Child*, ed. Paul Witty (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1951), pp. 133-134.

pointed out that "One of the conspicuous characteristics of gifted children is their early mastery of reading skills and their strong interest in books<sup>9</sup>." Surveys show that this interest continues<sup>10</sup>. This skill and interest can help the adolescent in solving the problems produced by his giftedness. In the variety of reading to which his interests lead him — novels, biographies, dramas, poems, etc.—he will undoubtedly find clues for self-directive adjustment; ideas that will contribute to the formation of values, characters who bear a resemblance to himself and to others in his environment, and conflicts that suggest his own. Through identification and the consequent catharsis attained, and through suggested paths of action, the gifted adolescent will find partial therapy for his dilemma.

Evidence shows that young people are greatly aided by suggestions that they derive from the contents of their reading. In the questionnaire survey of 1256 young people referred to above, adolescents testified that through books they had come to understand their problems better and to attain some degree of help. Al, a nineteen-year-old boy in New York City, achieved a better understanding of family relationships from reading Tarkington's *Seventeen*: "The problem was to get along with one's family and to accept the family as they are, first of all." "I was helped," he wrote, "to

understand my family better and to understand the problem teen agers have in growing up." After having read Cather's *Paul's Case*, Helen, a young woman in California, analyzed the problem of a dominant parent: "Paul was dominated by a harsh father. He felt very different from other people and resented his father greatly. He was nervous, bored, and unhappy." From reading the short story, she attained this understanding: "I became better able to see the parents' side of the story and to understand it. It helped me to see why I did many things and this helped me to correct them." Sue, another Californian, tired of being treated like a child, made an identification with the situation in Day's *Life with Father*. She recognized herself in this way: ". . . being the youngest in the family and having to get used to getting cast-off clothes. The problem of being too young to do the things the rest of the family could do." She derived this help: "Clarence Day has helped me to understand that parents don't mean to leave the youngest child out. I realized that even older people desire for an older age so they can do things they can't at present." Robert, a boy in the same state, found in Wolf's *Look Homeward, Angel* a situation that resembled his own: "Gene Gant's inability to make his mother appreciate his views on life and his personal longings." From this reading he ". . . realized that others had the same problem and had the same feeling of aloofness toward parents." Mary, another Californian, aged

<sup>9</sup>Paul Witty, "Improving the Reading of Gifted Children and Youth," *The Packet: Heath's Service Bulletin for Elementary Teachers*, VI (February, 1951), 3.

<sup>10</sup>Lewis M. Terman and Melita H. Oden, *The Gifted Child Grows Up*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1947, pp. 208-209.

nineteen, saw in Daly's *Seventeenth Summer* "... how you can break away and be independent of your family without hurting someone's feelings." This book "... helped me to understand my parents and also to gain my independence. It also helps to know that you aren't the only one with problems like that." From this novel, she attested, she learned to master the developmental tasks of (1) understanding members of her family so that she got along better with them; (2) getting along with persons of her own age; (3) attaining independence so that she could make decisions and act without dependence on older persons. In Chicago, Ted, a young adult, told how in earlier years the reading of Wright's *Black Boy* helped him in his problem: "I saw the difficulty that Wright had with his family about God and religion when he was sixteen. Therefore I decided to wait until I was twenty-one before I told my father what I thought of his God and religion. And that is what I did."

In New York City; Martin, a young man of seventeen years, was concerned about his physical incompetence. In reading Theodore Roosevelt's *The Strenuous Life*, he identified with the main character: "He was always the weaker one, puny, always the smallest one in a group, trying to build himself up." He summed up the situation: "The weak, puny one in a group, trying to build himself up, succeeded in building himself into something more than a weakling." From the book he got "... the push to at least try to build-up of myself." He asserted that

from this reading he was able to understand himself better and that he attained an ideal that served as a model for his development. Phyllis, a young Californian, was impressed by the way in which Philip in Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* "let his handicap get the best of him in his childhood. Then later he accepted it and rose above it, continuing on." She applied this lesson to herself: "It seemed I could see where I had reacted in the same way as Philip. Realizing that others have the same problem in overcoming handicaps and problems gives one new strength to overcome his own." From this novel she gained a better conception of her role in life as a woman, attained a better understanding of herself, and realized that she must make decisions and act without dependence on older persons.

In Missouri, Leonard, a Negro boy, aged nineteen, was troubled by the problem of social acceptance. He saw his problem in this way: "The problem of getting others to believe in you and your principles; how to handle people who are very disagreeable toward you." The story in Ferber's *Cimarron* helped him to understand "... how to handle people and command from them silently a certain respect just from your mere manner toward them." Bertha, a young woman in California, found some therapy for her concern about her human relations from reading Wylie's *Opus 21*. This was her dilemma: "My relations with people as a whole were not as they should be. I had more or less of a shell around me and could not relax around

people whom I did not know." This was her profit from Wylie's novel: "I was helped somewhat by his explanation of the actions of people. They were his own personal opinions and views but they did help to allay my fears of meeting people." In Texas, Mary, aged nineteen, admitted that she had too much shyness and pride in meeting people, that she could not ". . . open up readily to accept friendship." In reading Patrick's *The Hasty Heart*, she saw how this type of personality appears to other people and she got some suggestions on how to change herself. In New York City, Dora, aged eighteen, identified with Lambie, a sixteen-year-old girl in Runbeck's *Pink Magic*, who ". . . was shy and awkward in meeting young girls and especially boys." She said that from the reading of this novel she attained a better understanding of herself.

In these words adolescents expressed anxieties about their relations with their parents, their acceptance of themselves, and their social relations. Strang cites instances of perplexed gifted adolescents and quotes at length from their own analyses of problems relating to adjustments within the family, the sense of social inadequacy, unsatisfactory human relations, and the quest for values<sup>11</sup>. Most of these statements strike the same notes of youth troubled by problems of growing up as were heard in the statements quoted in the preceding paragraphs.

<sup>11</sup>Strang op. cit. pp. 135-142 *passim*

### Special Guidance Must Be Provided

Strang outlines a program of special guidance services for gifted young people who show indications of maladjustment. She concludes that "For gifted children in general the most important kind of counseling is that in which gifted children and adolescents develop understanding of themselves and their relations, and a clearer idea of their most acceptable self and the ways to achieve it<sup>12</sup>. It seems an inescapable conclusion that gifted adolescents' reading can have an important role in their achieving such an understanding and concept of self. To the therapies which Strang suggests for seriously disturbed gifted children and adolescents—milieu therapy, play therapy, psychotherapy, group therapy—one can, in an equally experimental mood, add bibliotherapy<sup>13</sup>.

Since gifted adolescents have high intelligence and an ability and interest in reading, their reading may be guided so that it will become an important factor in the attainment of adjustment. "We must bear in mind," Barzun reminds us, "that youth's most characteristic feeling about life is that of the

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>13</sup>See David H. Russell and Caroline Shrodes, "Contributions of Research on Bibliotherapy to the Language Arts Program," *The School Review*, LVIII (September, 1950), 335-342; LVIII (October, 1950), 411-420; F. W. Kaufman and W. S. Taylor, "Literature as Adjustment," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, XXXI (July, 1938), 229-234; S. I. Hayakawa, "Art and Tension," Ch. 9, *Language in Thought and Action*. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1949; Alice I. Bryan, "Can There Be a Science of Bibliotherapy?" *Library Journal*, LXIV (October, 1939), 774-775; Paul Witty, "Reading to Meet Emotional Needs," *Elementary English*, XXIX (February, 1952), 75-84; T. V. Moore, "Bibliotherapy," Ch. XIII, *The Nature and Treatment of Mental Disorders*. New York: Grune and Stratton, 1948; Caroline Shrodes, "Bibliotherapy," *The Reading Teacher*, IX (October, 1955), 24-29.

man overboard who sees miles between himself and the shore. Can he make it? 'Making it' means coping with life, alone, unhampered by parents. This means that young boys and girls will gladly take up with anyone who will talk freely of . . . moral rules, personal traits, virtues and vices, ways of fulfilling ambitions, all the paraphernalia, in short, of the explorer who does not know what dangers the jungle will present"<sup>14</sup>. Books frequently talk sagely to young people about such matters. Teachers, counselors, and librarians can draw on their own knowledge of reading materials and can make use of existing guides and indexes<sup>15</sup> to help them direct the adolescent to books, themes, characters, and situations which have a relevance to the problems which perplex him. From them, through identification, they will be helped in the attainment of that insight and understanding which, it is generally agreed, are the initial steps on the road to adjustment.

(Continued from Page 245)

Table 3.

Showing the reading progress of the Grade 1, Section 2 Class at the Arthur McGill School, New Castle, Pa., for the 1954-55 school year. The Otis Group I.Q. Tests were administered on March 1 and the Gates Reading Tests on May 9 by Dr. Elmer Delaney, Psychologist for the New Castle City Schools.

Pupil	I.Q.	Gates Reading Scores
1	129	3.47
2	111	3.30
3	107	3.10
4	116	3.05
5	116	2.98
6	111	2.97
7	109	2.93
8	97	2.77
9	105	2.77
10	129	2.71
11	108	2.65
12	107	2.63
13	89	2.59
14	101	2.54
15	109	2.47
16	109	2.47
17	105	2.46
18	98	2.45
19	120	2.45
20	124	2.42
21	104	2.42
22	101	2.41
23	131	2.40
24	94	2.37
25	143	2.34
26	103	2.28
27	103	2.27
28	104	2.27
29	90	2.27
30	116	2.21
31	107	2.14
32	116	2.09
33	80	2.08
Medians	108	2.46
Norm		1.8

<sup>14</sup>Jacques Barzun, *Teacher in America*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1945, pp. 152-153.

<sup>15</sup>Such as: Elbert Lenrow, *Reader's Guide to Prose Fiction*, New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1940; Richard L. Wampler and Carl C. Garrison, "Annotated Bibliography of Popular Literature Related to the Adolescent Age," *Peabody Journal of Education*, XXIII (July 1945), 18-23; Dwight Burton, "The Novel of the Adolescent," *The English Journal*, XL (September, 1951), 363-369; Alice R. Brooks, "Integrating Books and Reading with Adolescent Tasks," *The School Review*, LXIII (April, 1950), 211-219; Effie La Plante and Thelma O'Donnell, "Developmental Values Through Library Books," *Chicago Schools Journal*, XXXI (March-April, 1950 Supplement), 1-21; *Reading Ladders for Human Relations*, Revised and Enlarged Edition, By the Staff of Intergroup Education in Cooperating Schools, Hilda Taba, Director, Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1949; *Literature for Human Understanding*, By the Staff of Intergroup Education in Cooperating Schools, Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1948; Clara J. Kircher, *Character Formation Through Books: a Bibliography*. Second Edition, Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1945.

## Storytelling for the Gifted Child

by WILLIAM MARTIN, JR.  
● WINSTON STORY TELLER

**S**TORYTELLING at its best may be a gift. But it is a gift in which superior students may profitably share. Both by hearing and telling stories, gifted pupils develop skills in presenting their ideas and conclusions in an interesting way.

Telling stories is not limited to any particular literary style or to specified techniques. It holds but one standard: the telling must create a common interest and enjoyment. The "best" techniques are those inherent in each individual, and as such they will vary widely. The pupil gifted in music, art, science, or other fields, will find opportunities in storytelling to organize his varied experiences and observations and to relate them in an effective way.

Not the least of the values of this art is the pleasure the telling of stories will give to the storyteller as well as to the listener. As a student matures in storytelling, he pays increased attention to the listener, realizing no doubt that his communication of *feeling* as well as information is an important goal. When satisfaction and aesthetic pleasure are experienced by the listener, the storyteller has achieved this objective and storytelling rightly becomes an art<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*. London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1932.

### What Is Storytelling?

Storytelling has four component parts: the storyteller, story form, story material, and the listener. Each has an interrelated function without which the other parts cannot exist. Of the four, story form and the listener are essentially constant factors, while the storyteller and his choice of material are variable.

Centuries of practice perfected the story form on which young and old can suspend their stories with some assurance of success. Long before the beginning of recorded history, mankind was preserving and transmitting both real and hoped-for experiences in storytelling. Today storytelling is perhaps assuming greater significance than ever before through the popularity of certain programs on TV and radio and in the theatre that utilize the storytelling medium.

A good story to tell involves a logical sequence of incidences, each of which moves the plot toward the final moment of climax. Unlike lyric poetry, a story does not compel its audience to span any broad mental or emotional gap. It *leads* the listener, step by step, to higher and higher levels of reflection and appreciation.

Personal experience and its accompanying emotional reaction provide rich material for good storytelling. In

deciding what he can tell with best results, the storyteller should seek those events that have interested or have moved him deeply<sup>2</sup>. The selection might be an unusual happening in his life, a book or story thoroughly enjoyed, or an accumulation of knowledge associated with a rewarding interest. In short, story material can be any experience or any combination of experiences that excites feeling and imagination.

The role of the storyteller is that of threading remembered experiences into story form. Proportionate to his sincerity and directness, the storytelling succeeds or fails; for story form and story material live only in the language and spirit of the storyteller. His is a living, vital art.

The listener is the "sounding board" by which a storyteller hears his own story. The listener's interest and enjoyment, expressed in bodily reaction cause the storyteller to emphasize or minimize certain aspects of his story. This recurring action and reaction is what Froebel<sup>3</sup> called "mind breathing mind, power feeling power, and absorbing it." To achieve this level of communication the storyteller studies the faces of his listeners and notices which words, phrases, sentences, and anecdotes they enjoy. These items become increasingly important as he retells each story.

We are all storytellers at heart. Storytelling appears and reappears in our daily conversations. Especially for gifted pupils, storytelling may

prove a useful tool as well as a rewarding activity, because the gifted often have a rich background of experience from which they can draw interesting stories. If they grow expert and articulate through discipline in storytelling, they will have recourse to an ability that will be of great value to themselves and of still greater value perhaps to others.

#### **Are Some Children Gifted Storytellers?**

Some years ago a rather sensitive and awkward looking boy plagued his parents and anyone else who would listen with incessant "recitations." On invitation, he would add a song or dance to his repertory. He became a problem, both to himself and to others. His peers shunned him, adults teased him, and life hurt him. He withdrew deeper and deeper into isolation, maintaining but one small link with reality through his grandmother.

It was only determination and perseverance that enabled Hans Christian Andersen to conquer the handicaps that threatened his genius. From his earliest years, he demonstrated great talent with language and story form. He was what we call a "natural storyteller," seemingly endowed with the understanding of and skill in artistic expression. Unfortunately, he did not always have an appreciative audience. Had not his giftedness been linked with great drive, we probably would not find a tin soldier or a mechanical nightingale in our children's literature today.

An audience is an essential part of storytelling. A gift like Andersen's

<sup>2</sup>Ruth Sawyer, *The Way of the Storyteller*. New York: The Viking Press, 1940, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup>Friedrich Froebel, *Education of Man*. New York: Hallinan Tr., 1900, p. 207.

might survive a span of years without it, but most children's storytelling talent would wither without appreciative listeners.

It is encouraging that most elementary teachers today engage in storytelling in a suitable atmosphere. They frequently tell stories, they read aloud, and in turn they inspire children to read aloud and to tell stories. In some schools, the "sharing" period which nurtures storytelling continues through all grades. Relatively few schools, however, seem to provide children with a systematic approach to the next phase of storytelling which includes recognition of the story form and how to use it with increasing skill. Children need guidance and encouragement in fitting their personal experiences to the framework of a story. Without that skill, their storytelling ability will seldom progress beyond the stage of unrelated, often meaningless observations which fail to sustain listening interest and enjoyment.

I have known several children who possessed the gift of storytelling. Study of one of these children revealed an early precocity in language expression. At 18 months he was speaking in complete sentences. His vocabulary was very large. At two years he could repeat 108 pages of nursery rhymes, over 250 in all, pronouncing each word correctly, with definite comprehension of the spirit and meaning of the rhymes.

Until he entered kindergarten at 5, he spoke without slurring syllables, yet in a natural manner that indicated appreciation of the correct sounds of words. The child's speech habits were

modified to some extent from school playground influences, but he persisted in using language interestingly and artistically.

There seemed to have been no initial learning period in his use of storytelling. From the time he was very young, he was able to tell a story. His own interest along with encouragement from adults extended his experiences in the art. Now at the age of 12 he can compose a story easily. Most of his stories are interesting, original, and the characters in them are well delineated. He often writes stories for recreation; on occasion he practices telling stories, and often he observes that a certain story he had read aloud might have been better to tell.

This boy has an "ear" for language. He shows marked ability in reproducing dialects and speech rhythms. He memorizes quickly, apparently without great effort. Plots of books, names of characters, themes of plays and movies, TV commercials, and favorite poems and stories are recalled by him with unfailing accuracy.

His general superiority has been recognized in school. He was accelerated from the third grade to the fifth grade. He experienced some adjustment difficulties at this time, but his teachers observed that his language skill helped him adapt readily to the new situation.

This gifted child has had the advantages that every child is entitled to: an atmosphere of encouragement at home and school, good books to fulfill his many and varied interests, and the satisfaction of being recognized for his successes.

### What Can Schools Do to Help?

Because of children's propensity for storytelling, I hope for the time when storytelling practice will be a primary activity in the language arts program. That time seems remote, in view of the lack of storytelling courses throughout our schools today. One hopeful sign, however, might be the heavy enrollments in storytelling workshops, offered as in-service training by some school systems and as short-term courses by some colleges and universities. Most educators, it seems, are cognizant of the value of storytelling, but they do little to bring storytelling into the curriculum.

A first step toward improving the present situation might be to obtain an expert storyteller to serve a school system in a capacity similar to that of an art or music supervisor. The storytelling supervisor would train teachers in the skills of storytelling, in addition to telling stories in classrooms. Thus far it has fallen to the lot of many librarians to serve in a dual capacity of librarian-storyteller, and they are doing good work in relating storytelling to reading. From the first step, a school might expand its program and develop a storytelling curriculum that relates to all subjects in addition to serving the function of helping children employ the art for their own enjoyment.

### What Is the Teacher's Role?

The storytelling teacher is always a favorite. The intimacy and power of his art often accomplish minor miracles<sup>4</sup>. For example, when he senses a

growing tension in the classroom, he transports the children on the crest of a story's spell and thus reduces tension. Children "suffer more than we realize from the pressure of routines."<sup>5</sup> Psychologists point out that the effect of emotional stress upon attitudes and learning may be quite as great as their widespread effects upon bodily reaction<sup>6</sup>. It is a teacher's duty, therefore, to know how to "apply the brakes" when stress begins to appear in the classroom. Storytelling is a safeguard for that emergency.

The moment a teacher lays the text aside to tell a story, something remarkable usually happens. The children's minds become tuned to the teacher's with the speed of radar. They need not look up to see the smile on the teacher's lips and the warm glow in her eyes, for happiness is in the atmosphere. And

. . . now the storyteller comes,  
Let fall the trumpets, hush the  
drums!<sup>7</sup>

### What Can Storytelling Accomplish?

Enjoyment is an objective of storytelling. To divert this purpose to moralizing spoils the story experience. There are, however, many by-products of storytelling that can be related to educational aims.

Elementary teachers are well aware of ways that storytelling can extend experiences and crystallize concepts. But there is little storytelling done in

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup>Paul Witty, "Interest and Success—The Antidote to Stress," *Elementary English*, Vol. XXXII, (December 1955), p. 509.

<sup>7</sup>Kenneth Graham, *First Whispers of "The Wind in the Willows."*

<sup>4</sup>May Hill Arbuthnot, *Children and Books*. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1947, p. iv.

junior high and high schools and in colleges, possibly because we have come to think of storytelling as interesting only to children. Nothing could be more wrong. Storytelling is enjoyed by people of all ages, and tends to inspire everyone, regardless of age, to seek new and worthwhile goals in reading and language. This is the most enriching by-product of the art of storytelling, and one that should not be overlooked.

Any teacher who uses storytelling enthusiastically and sincerely probably will transfer some of his enthusiasm to his students. The books that he loves and shares through storytelling become "special" books to the listeners. These are the books the children usually look for first when they are selecting a new story to read. Many of the books the teacher as a storyteller introduces should treat interests typical of her group, but there should also be some easy-to-read stories that are "too good to miss," as well as some stories that challenge good readers. The group most apt to be neglected is the latter. Because they present few reading problems, we tend to neglect them in storytelling as well as in other phases of instruction. Not only should the good readers be introduced to many books they can read easily, but they should also be introduced to books which are more difficult. For example, *Wind in the Willows* can be enjoyed by children several years before they can read it themselves. *The Highwayman* delights fifth graders but few of them could master its form and

vocabulary in reading. *Kon-Tiki* appeals to most boys of scout age, but it demands a reading skill few of them possess. I feel that it is desirable for students to catalog books for future reading. By so doing, they are establishing their own goals for reading.

As much as the story itself, children love the flow of language in storytelling. They enjoy the music, the rhythm, the spirit of words. They like special meanings of words, and they like unusual words. But perhaps most of all, they enjoy the new thoughts that are possible with new words. Seumas MacManus once said that the spoken word is the remembered word. If this is true, and recalling my childhood I think it is, then every storytelling teacher is both a language and a reading teacher.

... there is an oral stage in our lives when our minds are receptive to words, when words naturally take the form of rhymes and when rhymes become a favorite possession. Rhymes that give some impression, that hold some mood, should be around us then—poems of the kind that can enter the mind of a child and remain one of its possessions.<sup>1</sup>

There should also be stores around us . . . Bible stories, animal stories, mystery stories, character stories; folk tales, wonder tales, true tales, tall tales, legendary tales. Each in its own way

*Please turn to page 239*

<sup>1</sup>Padriac Colum, foreword in *Under the Silver Umbrella*. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951, p. xi.

## Positions in the Field of Reading\*

RUTH STRANG

Teachers of every subject are seeking information concerning their responsibility for reading and a better understanding of how the reading specialist can aid them in their work. Administrators, at times, do not always see clearly enough the contribution which each member of their staff, including the specialist in reading, might make to the total program for the improvement of reading. They also need to know more about the qualifications and salaries for different reading positions, when presenting to their Boards their requests for additional staff. Specialists in reading want to know how other persons in similar positions are meeting the demands of their situations. College and university teachers, in order to give the practical kind of education reading specialists require to perform their functions, need a realistic view of the kinds of jobs these persons have to do in the field. The study should also benefit placement officers, who, when receiving requests for persons to do various types of reading work, are often uncertain of the kinds of persons to recommend.

This study consists of job descriptions of a wide range of reading positions. It was undertaken with the aim of learning more about the work being done by persons in various reading po-

"To all members of NART and ICIRI who took time from their crowded day to fill in so thoughtfully the report form analyzing their present status and function, the committee wishes to express much appreciation. Any cooperative survey of this kind depends primarily on their generosity and interest in the development of their professional field."

sitions. Such information should give a better understanding of recent developments in the field and of their implications for present and future growth. The concrete descriptions of the work done in situations similar to one's own constitutes the next best thing to a visit to see others at work. Like visits, these job descriptions suggest lacks and deficiencies as well as patterns and procedures that other workers may develop in modified form in their own schools.

In many other fields detailed job descriptions have met the need for knowing what the exigencies of the situation have demanded of workers and how they have developed their positions to meet these demands. Such job descriptions have not previously been made in the field of reading.

### Methods of Study and Sources of Data

The initial ideas for the choice of method and sampling of population to obtain data for this study were suggested by the committee appointed by William S. Gray, when he was Presi-

\*For the detailed report from which these excerpts and summary were taken see Kathryn Imogene Dever, *Positions in the Field of Reading*. New York: Teachers College Bureau of Publications, 1956. Probable price: \$3.75.

dent of the National Association for Remedial Teaching. This committee concluded that a general survey of reading positions throughout the country was not feasible and that a more desirable approach would be to concentrate on obtaining information about the positions held by members of the two major reading associations, the National Association for Remedial Teaching and the International Council for the Improvement of Reading Instruction.

The form asked for the following information: the title of the position; the time devoted to reading work; the grade levels and kinds of groups with which they work; the varied responsibilities of the reading person—administration, supervision, counseling, testing and diagnosis, clerical work, teaching, research, and work with community groups. Also included were a request for a freely written description of work performed; a list of the materials, equipment, and procedures used; and statements about the testing program and methods of appraising progress. Several questions pertained to preparation for reading work, such as degrees and diplomas held and major subjects pursued in undergraduate and graduate study. Other questions related to qualifications needed for the position, how the position was obtained, and the salary received. Finally, there was an opportunity for the respondent to express his degree of satisfaction with his position and to indicate changes he would like to make.

The number of questionnaires sent was 2,961; the number of replies received was 480, a return of 16 per cent. This percentage of returns is small when considered for general survey purposes. However, when judged by the number of descriptions received and the wealth of information obtained on each type of position, it appears to be an effective source of the kind of information sought in this study—namely, job descriptions of a large number of different kinds of reading positions.

It was most gratifying to receive comments like the following which indicated that filling out the form not only constituted a contribution to the professional field of reading but also conferred some personal benefit on the respondent: "I enjoyed making this analysis. It cleared my own thinking, and I hope it will be of some help to your committee."

#### **Job Descriptions of Positions in the Reading Field**

The study presents patterns of general functions, descriptions of specific positions, and summaries of qualifications for and satisfactions derived from various types of reading positions. These job descriptions are based on replies from 272 reading specialists, who, as members of the N.A.R.T. or the I.C.I.R.I., contributed to this study.

##### **1. Special Teachers of Reading**

The reading positions in this section are those in which the person spends most of his time working directly with pupils rather than supervising teach-

ers. The number of persons replying to the Job Description form in each of four types of position in this group are:

Remedial reading teachers . . . . .	60
Reading teachers . . . . .	17
Remedial teachers . . . . .	16
Adjustment teachers . . . . .	12
Total . . . . .	105

*Common functions* — The general responsibilities these special teachers of reading are essentially the same; in certain positions, however, some functions receive more emphasis than in others. Also, a few minor duties are performed in some positions and not in others. The main functions of the positions in this section are teaching, testing and diagnosis, supervision, and counseling. Performed to a lesser degree are clerical and administrative duties, research work, and public relations.

*General job summary: work performed* — Organizes and conducts a program of reading instruction to help pupils with reading difficulties and to aid teachers who wish assistance with reading work.

Teaches reading primarily with emphasis on the remedial approach to children and adults—individually, in small groups, and in classes. Gives and interprets reading, achievement, and intelligence tests. Diagnoses reading and related difficulties and gives remedial treatment or recommends such help. Teaches demonstration lessons and helps classroom teachers as consultant and resource person in planning and carrying out responsibilities entailed in their teaching of reading.

Counsels pupils and parents through individual case work and group guidance. Performs certain clerical and administrative work. Engages in research mainly for immediate use in helping pupils and supervising teachers. Acts in public relations capacity.

Most of these special teachers of reading spend more than half of their time in teaching, and the next largest amount (40%) of their time in testing and diagnosis. Half of this group teach reading exclusively, one third combine reading with the teaching of English, and about one fourth teach other subjects.

Most of these reading teachers work with individual pupils, having, on the average, a case load of thirty-eight. They also work with small groups of four to six pupils. Some teach classes, usually of about fifteen to twenty pupils.

*Preparation* — Nine-tenths of these reading teachers had earned or were engaged in study for a Master's or higher degree. They entered the field with a broad educational background and often changed their major for graduate work to education, guidance, psychology, or reading. Successful classroom experience was prominent among the qualifications required and desired.

*Getting jobs* — In getting positions recommendations by former or present associates and their own interest in reading while serving as classroom teachers were most frequently mentioned.

*Qualifications* — It is difficult to say what personal qualifications should be

expected of the person aspiring to teach reading. Many personal qualities are intangible and are not easily defined or interpreted. It seems likely that the qualities needed will vary with the pupil's personality and needs—one child may require firmness; another may respond to entirely different treatment.

The most frequently mentioned social requisite was "a sympathetic understanding and love for children." Second in frequency of mention was the ability to work successfully with teachers, supervisors, parents, and children.

*Job satisfaction*—These special reading teachers expressed a high degree of satisfaction and enthusiasm for their work. More than half checked the statement, "There's no kind of work I'd rather do." Their main dissatisfactions were those of too many children to help and too little time to help them. Some teachers were dissatisfied with their efforts to coordinate remedial reading work with that of the classroom. They made such comments as the following:

Classroom teachers feel no obligation to give additional help to pupils receiving remedial help.

Classroom teachers send problem children to the reading room to get them out of the classroom; it is sometimes difficult to convince a teacher the child is working up to his capacity.

Some teachers and principals do not understand what the teacher of reading is trying to do.

Poor physical facilities and supplies were also mentioned as a cause of dissatisfaction. Only five teachers said that their salaries were unsatisfactory.

The changes they would like to make in their positions related directly to the sources of dissatisfaction. They would like to have more time to work with individual cases and with small groups, to assist in inservice education programs, to confer with parents, to do more adequate diagnosis and preparation for their work, and to develop a course of study based on local needs. Some were aware of the importance of the reading coordinator who would work with and through teachers. Some would also like to spend less time with the low IQ's and more with those of average and superior ability. Others suggested omitting the word *remedial* in their title because some students were sensitive to taking "remedial reading."

*Salaries received*—The total annual salaries of these special reading teachers covered a range of from \$1500 to \$6500 with a median of around \$4200. Some reported earning from \$30 to \$1500 additional through private tutoring, lecturing, writing articles.

## 2. Supervisory Reading Specialists

In these reading positions persons spend a great deal of time working with teachers and other school personnel. The five groups, whose duties place them in this section, and the numbers in each group filling out the form are:

Reading consultants .....	30
Reading supervisors .....	16
Reading specialists .....	10
Reading coordinators .....	8
Helping teachers .....	5
Total .....	<hr/> 69

*Common functions* — The general responsibilities of different types of supervisory reading specialists are similar. Chief among these are supervision, coordinating, and consultant services to many different groups; testing and diagnosis; remedial work with pupils on all levels of intelligence; teaching and counseling parents and pupils; conducting inservice education programs. Others less frequently performed are clerical and administrative work, research, and public relations.

They operate the reading room or center. They plan and carry out activities of the reading program for the school year; prepare exhibits; and serve on committees concerned with reading, curriculum, course of study, and other school policies and activities. They may set up libraries appropriate for pupils' free reading and for the use of teachers.

To some extent, these functions are performed by persons in each of the five supervisory groups. However, there is diversity in the manner in which they perform different duties and the amount of time they devote to them. One person may spend the entire time in supervision; another may do some supervision but also do testing, teaching, and counseling. A few engage in research for immediate use as well as for publication. A lim-

ited number work with community groups. As a whole, the persons whose work is described in this section spend more time in supervision than with other duties. (A wealth of detail on each of the five supervisory groups is given in the complete report.)

*Personal qualifications* — These were similar to those mentioned by reading teachers, with perhaps more emphasis on tact, ability to work with others, reputation for successful work, and willingness to grow professionally.

*Education and experience* — All of this supervisory group had either obtained or were working for a Master's or higher degree; four had or were working for a professional diploma; ten for a Doctor of Education, and two for a Doctor of Philosophy degree. The experience qualification most frequently mentioned as required was teaching. Eight stated that reading clinical or laboratory experience was required.

*Job satisfaction* — This group of reading specialists, like the reading teachers, expressed great satisfaction in and enthusiasm for their work. The causes of dissatisfaction were insufficient time, personnel problems, and inadequacy of physical facilities. The changes they would like to make were similar to those suggested by the reading teachers.

*Salaries* — The salaries of this supervisory group ranged from \$3500 to \$6750 with a median around \$5000. Some of them earned additional fees ranging from \$100 to \$2500.

The case studies of typical positions gives much more detail about func-

tions, daily schedule of work, methods and materials, and other aspects of their work. (See Kathryn Imogene Dever, *Positions in the Field of Reading*, Teachers College Bureau of Publications, New York, 1956.)

### 3. Reading Specialists in Higher Education

There were fifty-eight persons engaged in various kinds of college and university work. The positions included in this section and the number of persons holding such positions are as follows:

Directors of reading clinics or laboratories .....	34
Assistants in reading work .....	14
Reading consultants and su- pervisors .....	10
Total.....	58

*Common functions*—An analysis of these college and university reading positions showed considerable variation, but the main duties reported were as follows: Teaches reading primarily to college students, but may also work with pupils from other educational levels on reading difficulties, or with business and industrial personnel to improve reading. Instructs both prospective teachers and teachers in service in the fundamentals of teaching reading and reading clinical work.

Directs activities of reading clinic or laboratory. Works with students, teachers, clinical personnel, and clerical workers. Supervises testing, diagnostic, and remedial procedures. Counsels and advises college students; may counsel pupils or parents referred to clinic for special help. Does admin-

istrative work required in operation of clinic and execution of professional and departmental responsibilities. Engages in research for immediate use and publication. Works with community groups. Does public relations work.

Teaching was the main responsibility of this group of specialists. Testing and diagnosis took up to half the time of forty-two of these persons and about the same number spent approximately 40 per cent of their time in supervision.

*Education and experience*—More than half of the thirty-four reading directors held a Doctor's degree and nineteen of the college and university group were working for that degree. Their fields in graduate study were, in order of frequency, education, reading, psychology, English, guidance, and social studies. For the most part, the positions of these reading specialists in higher education required more educational background than did those of other reading specialists.

Even on the college level teaching was the most frequently mentioned experience required; reading clinical experience less frequently.

*How positions were obtained*—The majority of persons in higher education were invited to take the positions because they were personally or professionally known. As on other educational levels, there appears to be no uniformity in setting up qualifications for these positions. Since some of these positions were in the Student Personnel Department, the applicants were

selected by the Personnel Director or the Dean.

*Job satisfaction*—This reading group in higher education likewise expressed optimum satisfaction in their work all or most of the time. Their dissatisfactions related chiefly to insufficient time for work with individuals and for research, personnel difficulties, administrative complications, and poor physical facilities. They would like to expand their program by enlarging staff, facilities, and services, and to be relieved of some of their other responsibilities so that they could devote more time to reading.

*Salaries*—The total annual salaries of the thirty-four reading directors varied from \$3400 to \$14,000; the median was \$5500. More than half earned additional fees of \$200 to \$5000 through tutoring, lecturing, writing, and other services. The average salary of the reading consultants was next in order and that of the reading assistants and instructors was the lowest. Educational preparation appeared to be the most significant factor accounting for differences in salary.

#### 4. Specialists in Reading Clinical Work

Forty-one persons in various types of clinical and counseling positions described their reading work. With few exceptions, these specialists were located in elementary or secondary schools; nine directed independent clinics where they worked with persons of all ages. The titles of these persons and the number holding each title are as follows:

Title	Number of Persons Holding Title
Director of Reading Clinic (Elementary or High School) .....	16
Director of Reading Clinic (Independent) .....	9
Reading Counselor .....	8
School Psychologist .....	8
Total.....	<b>41</b>

The information concerning these positions is too limited and too diversified for a composite analysis. In the full report brief summaries of each of the four groups are given, with illustrations from specific positions. With one exception all had completed or were working for a Master's or higher degree in education, reading, guidance, or psychology. Their major dissatisfactions resulted from insufficient time and personnel problems. Their salaries ranged from \$2700 to \$6500, with a median of \$4800 and the possibility of earning additional fees of \$100 to \$1500.

The nine directors of independent clinics are primarily concerned with diagnosis and remediation but may also have considerable administrative and staff-training functions. This group seemed to have had less preparation in reading per se than the other types of specialists described. Perhaps they depend upon their staff for actual work with cases.

The eight reading counselors work with reading problems referred to them. One specializes in "remedial reading therapy" and works with psy-

chologists, psychiatrists, and social work in a guidance institute.

The eight school psychologists devoted full time or part time to reading work, often integrated with other functions.

#### 5. Other Positions Having Responsibility for Reading

Information was obtained from five other types of position involving work in reading. The numbers in each position are as follows:

Title	Number of Persons Holding Title
Group One.	
Classroom Teachers . . . . .	84
Group Two.	
English Teachers . . . . .	19
Group Three.	
Supervisors and Coordinators . . . . .	28
Group Four.	
Administrators and Directors . . . . .	22
Group Five.	
Persons in Guidance . . . . .	9
	<hr/> Total . . . . .
	162

Of eighty-four classroom teachers in positions ranging from kindergarten to high school, approximately one half spent more than half time with reading work. The amount of time was difficult to estimate because, as one teacher said, "I find myself teaching reading in all my classes." A few of these teachers had specialized in reading as graduate students and others were working for advanced degrees in the field. Many expressed a need for further study in reading and related

courses. Their major dissatisfactions were with overcrowded classrooms and with lack of special reading services to which they might refer students.

Nineteen English teachers in junior and senior high school reported reading as one of their primary functions. They devote from less than half to full time to reading. Some of these English teachers have specialized in reading.

General supervisors and coordinators in city and county school systems reported reading work as part of their supervisory responsibilities. Administrators and directors of education sometimes teach reading themselves but more often help teachers with their reading problems. One of this group held a Ph.D. in reading. Some who had not prepared for their responsibilities in reading were currently trying to acquire such experience.

In various guidance positions some knowledge of reading was needed. The major function of four visiting teachers was counseling pupils who were having difficulties in their school adjustment. A director of child guidance shared responsibility with the curriculum director for developing a long-range reading program in the school system. Guidance persons recognized a pronounced need for reading work in their various situations.

In other fields such as library science, optometry, research, textbook writing the need for preparation in reading was also recognized.

It is very significant that so many teachers, administrators, guidance workers, and supervisors have so much responsibility for the improve-

ment of reading. Many of them, recognizing this need, have taken courses in reading, even choosing this field as their major in graduate study. Apparently the exigencies of the situation are requiring high school teachers and other members of the school staff to obtain more precise knowledge of the nature of reading and of materials and methods of instruction needed by high school students in their personal and academic development through reading.

#### Concluding Statement

Some of the significant observations growing out of these data were:

The large proportion of persons (approximately one fifth) who had pioneered in their present positions.

The increased demand for reading specialists.

The shift from work primarily with pupils to more and more consultant work with teachers.

The widespread demand for persons employed in other supervisory, administrative, and teaching positions who have some knowledge of methods and materials for teaching reading.

The need for setting up qualification standards for those who are to be employed as reading teachers or specialists.

This report gives only a meager view of the wealth of information obtainable in Dr. Dever's book on functions, programs, schedules, methods and materials, qualifications, satisfac-

(Continued from page 230)

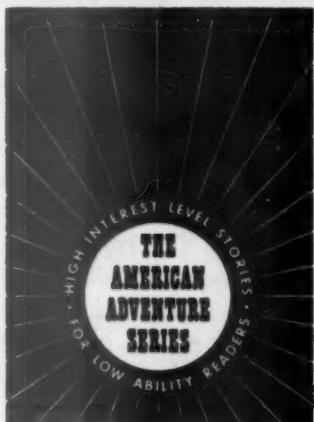
will offer a focus for relating other material to children's experiences.

Children, too, should have their turns at storytelling. The telling of personal experiences in story form is the beginning step. This type of storytelling is easiest since the child already knows both the experience and the vocabulary. The telling of favorite stories, those remembered from reading or listening, is the next step. The child still uses his own vocabulary but the story-line is borrowed from another. When his reading skill permits, a child can be encouraged to read aloud. Now he is using both the vocabulary and the story experience of another. Only by continued practice can he finally acquire a free and natural quality in storytelling. Storytelling becomes a process of assimilating new words, thoughts, and language patterns. Children like the lilt of words in *A Pop Corn Song*; they like the fun of ideas in *Horton Hatches the Egg*; they like the power of language in the *47th Psalm*; they like the courage in the story of *Riki Tikki Tavi*.

When storytelling finds its way into all classrooms, we not only will have added motivation in all areas of learning for all children, but we also will have taken one important step in caring for our gifted pupils.

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tions, salaries, and suggestions for the improvement of positions in the field of reading.



Edited by Dr. Emmett A. Betts, director Betts Reading Clinic, Haverford, Pa.

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## The New Castle Reading Experiment (A PROGRESS REPORT)

GLENN McCRAKEN

IN 1949 A LONG-TERM experimental program was instituted in the New Castle, Pennsylvania, elementary schools to test the value of the correlated visual image in the teaching of primary reading. Film-strips were prepared to accompany a particular basal reading series so there would be at least one filmstrip frame for every lesson in the basic books. In this program all initial teaching occurs at the projection screen, the textbooks being used only for extended reading practice and to test the learning.

The values of this interesting methodology soon became obvious. The children were delighted with the picture method. Their attention spans were tripled. Lessons were presented in a colorful and vivid manner. This transfer to a "child-like" program produced results far superior to any heretofore achieved by primary children. All pupils, regardless of mental ability or apparent readiness for reading, learned to read. Pupils with I.Q.s as low as 71 made a full year's progress in one school term and a great many children with average and superior abilities achieved three years progress in eight months, as measured by standardized reading tests. Since 1949 more than 600 pupils have participated in this program and none has achieved lower than average progress.

Numerous articles<sup>1</sup> have been written about this program in which the procedures, techniques, values, results, and implications have been listed. In some of these articles tables have been provided to show that in some beginning classes as many as two-thirds of the pupils achieved reading scores above the third-grade level. The object of the present article is to offer additional tabular data for the 1954-55 school year which continues to bear out our previous contention that nearly every six-year-old boy and girl is ready to learn to read if a "child-like" program is employed.

Up to the present time we have continued to teach one beginning class at the McGill school by the traditional method (for comparison purposes) while the others have participated in the visual program. It has been our policy to assign an outstanding experienced teacher to the traditional class and to place new and beginning teachers in the visual classes with one exception in which an experienced teacher has continued to teach one of

<sup>1</sup>Glenn McCracken, "Have We Over-Emphasized the Readiness Factor?" *Elementary English*, XXIX (May, 1952), 271-276; "The New Castle Reading Experiment—A Terminal Report," *Elementary English*, XXX (January, 1955), 18-21; "The New Castle Reading Experiment," *Elementary School Journal*, (March, 1954); "We Must Modernize Reading Instruction," *The Reading Teacher*, (December, 1954), 100-106; "Visual Values in Reading Discovered at New Castle," *Net News*, (October, 1954).

the experimental classes. We also have followed a plan of assigning somewhat superior pupils to the traditional class so there can be no question as has been proved year after year that the visual method is far superior regardless of who teaches it.

The accompanying tables provide a nearly typical example of the comparison among these classes. Table 1 shows the results in the traditional class for the 1954-55 school year. Note that the median I.Q. was 112 (rather high) and that the median achievement score in reading was 2.34. The third column of this table reveals, however, that seven pupils (21%) scored below the norm of 1.8 in reading achievement as measured by the Gates Reading Tests. The table also shows that all pupils in the class with I.Q.s of 90 or lower scored below the norm. This situation is rather typical. In the generally accepted method of teaching beginning reading, we anticipate that 10 to 20 percent of the children will range somewhere between inadequacy and failure in reading achievement. Research has so indicated. We also know that present reading methodology is particularly ineffective with pupils whose mental abilities range between 70 and 90. So the tabular data for this class is typical considering that the average mental ability is rather high.

Table 2 shows similar data for another section of the Grade 1 class at the same school and for the same year. This class was taught by a beginning teacher who was graduated from a State Teachers' College the

previous spring. She employed the new visual method. It should be noted here that, while this young woman followed the textbook and textfilm manuals rather diligently, she had yet to acquire the many effective procedures which are common tools of teaching and which can be gained only through experience. Also, her health status was much below average during the entire latter half of the school year. Note that the median I.Q. in this class was 108 (four points lower than the median for the traditional class). Column three shows a reading achievement median of 2.37, only slightly higher. The difference lies in the absence of any poor reading scores. Every pupil achieved above the reading norm. Note that the poorest score is half a year above average. The reading accomplishment in this class was further borne out during an interesting moment we experienced in our office on the last day of the school year when this young teacher came in to leave her final reports before moving out of the state. She said, "Tell the second grade teacher who gets these children next year that she hasn't a thing to worry about. Every one of my children is a good reader."

Table 3 gives the data for the third section of beginners, also taught by the new visual method. Here again, the median I.Q. is 108. The median reading score is 2.46 and, again, there are no poor scores. Every pupil achieved into the second-grade level after his first eight months in school. Note, too, the fact that pupils with I.Q.s of 90 and lower also learned

to read as they have been doing year after year in these classes. Even the pupil with an I.Q. of 80 scored a grade equivalent of 2.08. This child with the lowest I.Q. can read. At the close of the school year she could pick up any available first-grade reading materials and read them with fluency and comprehension.

It may seem to the reader on cursory examination of the accompanying tables that there really is not so much difference between the achievement in the traditional class and that in the visual classes. And, in fact, the difference for this particular year is much less than for any previous year. But it cannot be denied that the difference which does exist lies in a most important area; namely, among those pupils with less ability. In the traditional class (Table 1) 21 percent of the children were sub-standard readers while in the two visual classes there were no sub-standard readers. For five straight years now, in 21 classes involving more than 600 pupils taught by the visual method, no child has achieved below the norm while in all of our traditionally taught groups ten to twenty percent of inadequacy exists.

It has become obvious to the teachers at the McGill School that the visual classes always produce the best readers. Our experienced teachers now are fully aware that beginning teachers coming into the building always produce superior readers with their visualized instruction and the experienced people have asked for the new program.

We are now ready to report on out-

side evaluation of this program. During the past few years we have noticed three or four articles in which some question has been raised regarding the possibility of the high achievement we have been reporting, and questioning our implications regarding readiness because we have claimed that six-year-old children are ready to learn to read if an effective program is employed. We note, however, that these questions have been raised by people who have not seen the classes in operation. During the 1954-55 school year we had hundreds of visitors—as many as 45 in one day—from various parts of the country. Some were here for two or three days at a time. So far as we were able to determine, no visitor took exception to our claim that all of our children could read at or above the average level. Many of these visitors came back to the school on two or three different occasions. Quite a number of these people now are trying the program.

Space will permit us to report on only three of these visitations as follows: Dr. A is Principal of a large elementary school in a city in New Jersey. In 1953 he and a psychologist from his district visited our classes. He came here full of skepticism about our ambitious reports but before leaving he had this to say, "In my school I now know that we take a negative approach to reading instruction. We assume that many children will not learn to read. Throughout the year we transfer many to special education classes. Here in New Castle such children are becoming good readers and

enjoying the experience. I shall install a similar program at once." Last spring we had a letter from this man in which he said in part, "I could never in a letter tell you of the marked improvement in reading achievement in our school. Instead of placing many of our pupils in special education classes we now are teaching them to read and we fully anticipate that our results will equal those you have been reporting from New Castle."

Dr. B is a rather well known reading consultant for several school districts in the eastern New York area. She spent three days here last year. She studied the children and their program. She checked their reading progress carefully. Before leaving us she had this to say: "In the districts which I serve it is common to have six to ten children in each of our second grade classes who *cannot read at all* and, of course, many first graders do not read. Here at McGill I did not find even one poor reader at any level. In addition to this, the thing that impressed me most was the attitudes and the maturity of the pupils. The beginners do not seem like little children. They are so confident and happy. They know what they are doing. They discuss problems with vigor and enthusiasm."

Dr. C is a Professor of reading instruction at a large Pennsylvania university. In addition, he serves as Director of elementary education in a northern Pennsylvania county. A year ago he visited our classes on three different occasions. Then he installed the program in several schools in his

own county. The improvement in reading instruction in these schools was so immediate that the board of school directors for that county demonstrated the program on a television program and, through the TV medium, the Board President reported to his constituents, "You can look for a great improvement in reading in your public schools. In this county we have just done something modern about reading instruction."

Is it any wonder that we protest so vigorously year after year against the current thinking regarding the readiness of children for the reading experience? It is time we cease blaming the children for the inadequacies of an out-dated method of reading instruction. We say children do not learn to read because they are immature, poorly fed, uninterested, pampered at home, have too many conflicting interests, too much money, too many toys, radio, TV, etc. And we are fully in error. There is nothing wrong with our children. They are the best fed, best informed children in the history of our country. They travel more, live in better homes, have better health and better schools than ever. But they travel in fast cars, fast trains, and in fast airplanes. On TV they watch thrilling drama in which guns are spouting flame over all the place and in which men are dying violent deaths every day. And when these little boys and girls lay down their outer space helmets and come to our schools for instruction we cannot hope to interest them or instruct them effectively so long as we cling to out-dated methods

and adult-centered materials. Let us not be afraid to admit that the fault may lie in the instruction rather than in the instructed.

Table 1.

Showing the reading progress of the Grade 1, Section 1 Class at the Arthur McGill School, New Castle, Pa., for the 1954-55 school year. The Otis Group I.Q. Tests were administered on March 1 and the Gates Reading Tests on May 9 by Dr. Elmer DeLancy, Psychologist for the New Castle City Schools.

Pupil	I.Q.	Gates Reading Scores
1	Ab.	3.51
2	111	3.37
3	124	3.13
4	139	3.01
5	120	2.97
6	114	2.92
7	150	2.90
8	137	2.82
9	109	2.70
10	Ab.	2.59
11	Ab.	2.52
12	117	2.51
13	103	2.41
14	139	2.39
15	105	2.37
16	133	2.34
17	133	2.34
18	Ab.	2.32
19	116	2.27
20	119	2.21
21	104	2.19
22	103	2.06
23	109	2.02
24	133	2.00
25	100	1.99
26	105	1.96
27	90	1.75
28	Ab.	1.73
29	114	1.62
30	89	1.59
31	103	1.57
32	84	1.50
33	96	1.50
Medians	112	2.34
Norm		1.8

Table 2.

Showing the reading progress of the Grade 1, Section 3 Class at the Arthur McGill School, New Castle, Pa., for the 1954-55 school year. The Otis Group I.Q. Tests were administered on March 1 and the Gates Reading Tests on May 9 by Dr. Elmer DeLancy, Psychologist for the New Castle City Schools.

Pupil	I.Q.	Gates Reading Scores
1	124	3.35
2	104	3.12
3	135	2.92
4	137	2.87
5	122	2.80
6	135	2.77
7	97	2.75
8	104	2.67
9	109	2.63
10	Ab.	2.60
11	103	2.50
12	100	2.49
13	Ab.	2.43
14	Ab.	2.37
15	96	2.37
16	104	2.35
17	114	2.31
18	101	2.30
19	100	2.29
20	108	2.28
21	112	2.28
22	Ab.	2.23
23	109	2.27
24	114	2.16
25	112	2.14
26	107	2.08
27	120	2.05
28	94	2.03
29	97	2.01
30	101	1.86
Medians	108	2.37
Norm		1.8

(Table 3 is on page 225)

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## WHAT OTHER MAGAZINES ARE SAYING ABOUT THE TEACHING OF READING

MURIEL POTTER LANGMAN  
MICHIGAN STATE NORMAL COLLEGE

"Parents' Opinions of Reading Instruction." Hugo E. Presnell. *Elementary English*, January, 1956.

This article is a report on a questionnaire study made in Richmond, California, the subjects being the parents of fourth and fifth grade children in two elementary schools. More of these parents are professional and semi-professional people than is usual in the general population of the United States.

The findings will be most interesting to those concerned with public relations in education. A few follow: Only 14 per cent of these parents believed their children were reading poorly. 91 per cent want the alphabet learned at or near the first grade level. Most parents favor ability groupings for reading instruction, 74 per cent want the children given an easier book to read but kept with their grade. 80 per cent want their children kept at grade level and grouped with other children of their own reading level. Only 16 per cent of parents believe that *former methods of teaching are not as effective as methods used today* (italics the writer's).

Some parents attributed reading difficulties to lack of training in the alphabet, but most comments expressed confidence in the teacher. They "commented persistently, registering disappointment time and time again, that phonics had been neglected in the child's school life . . . superiority of reading instruction in the past was often attributed to phonics."

The investigator concludes that knowing parents' opinions should be helpful to teachers and administrators so that misconceptions can be corrected and purposes and methods of teaching more clearly explained.

"The Filmstrip Explains the Reading Program." Eva May Green. *Elementary English*, January, 1956.

The Salt Lake City Public Schools, through the cooperation of a committee comprising a group of primary grade teachers, the supervisor of kindergarten and primary education, and the director of audio-visual education have produced a pamphlet and a related filmstrip to orient parents to the beginning reading program. Suggestions are given as to how parents may help in the pre-reading period, and techniques used by teachers in actual reading instruction and demonstrated and explained. The filmstrip has been found an effective means of answering parents' questions about reading.

"Picture Dictionaries." Margaret B. Parke. *Elementary English*, December, 1955.

This interesting article, followed by a long and useful bibliography, discusses the format, uses, choice of words, and values of this new and intriguing type of dictionary. The writer raises a number of questions for further study, particularly questions related to the use of the picture dictionary in teaching reading in primary grades.

"Mental Maturity Versus Perception Abilities in Primary Reading." Sister Mary James Harrington, S. C. L. and Donald D. Durrell. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, October, 1955.

This study examines the relationship between scores on visual discrimination (and visual memory), auditory discrimination (involving recognition of initial consonant sounds, rhymes, final consonants, etc.), mental age as measured by the Otis Alpha, and reading success (scores on an oral reading test and a silent word classification test). The study was originally conducted by means of paired groups drawn from second-grade children in Boston in schools that

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gave training in auditory and visual discrimination and in phonics.

All three traits, auditory perception, visual perception, and phonics were all found to be factors in successful reading achievement, but mental age (Otis Alpha scores) seemed to have little relationship to reading success. The experimenters believe this to be natural in view of the fact that the Otis Alpha emphasizes ability to follow oral directions.

A correlational study of the 500 children in Boston who formed the paired groups was also made. Visual discrimination showed a higher correlation with reading success than did phonics in this population. The study was repeated with 1000 children from schools in several midwestern states, and not much difference was found here between the visual perception scores of the high and low group. Differences in phonics and auditory perception, however, remained clearly related to reading success.

**"Complete Reading vs. Partial Reading."**  
E. W. Dolch. *Elementary English*, January, 1956.

Dr. Dolch points out that many children are expected to read textbooks "completely" but are unable to do so because of the number of words in these books that are neither recognized at sight nor within the word analysis ability of the child reader. He makes a plea for the use of the independent reading period during which a child can read "completely" from books at his true reading level, thus experiencing not only complete comprehension but enjoyment and ease in reading as well.

Teachers are often concerned because children score higher in grade points on reading tests than their actual ability to read a graded book. Dr. Dolch says this comes about because the reading test tends to require only "partial" reading to obtain a correct answer. Moreover, almost all reading from textbooks is study reading, and if the author's meaning is to be grasped the child needs guidance and assistance from the teacher.

Children need both to extend their reading ability through guided reading and reading instruction, and to develop fluency and good attitudes toward reading through enjoyment. Thus both "complete" and "partial" reading have their values.

**"Emotional and Personality Problems of a Group of Retarded Readers."** Louise Metoyer Bouise. *Elementary English*, December, 1955.

The seventh graders who were the subjects of this study were selected both because they seemed in need of special guidance for their emotional problems and because their reading achievement was very low. They were chosen from a group of children given achievement and non-language mental ability tests. A high-scoring and a low-scoring group were compared, the low group having capacity to read, but scoring below the median for the total group in reading. These children composing the low group had chronological and mental ages of 12 or over, were of normal intelligence or better, and showed the largest difference between reading age and mental age.

When comparisons were made in background problems between the good and poor reader groups, about an equal number of children in each group were found to be products of broken homes. The good readers, however, "felt more secure" at home than the poor readers. In contrast, only one of the good reader group had a part time job, while eight of the retarded readers worked after school and on Saturday.

Teachers concluded from the case histories that 21 of the 30 retarded readers could be called behavior problems or children with problems. Among the problems noted were "overdeveloped physically, severe attitude of resentment, stutters, misbehaves, aggressive, restless, pugnacious, chronic absence, dishonest."

On the Hildreth Interest Inventory these children showed a preference for activities requiring little or no reading. They were interested in the same out-

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of-school activities as the good readers, but spent more time at movies, had fewer close friends. Their vocational choices were less clear, and some had no ideas at all for the future. They felt inferior to their classmates.

On the Detroit Adjustment Inventory the good readers were found to be well adjusted as a group in seven areas, the poor readers in only one, "community-social." Maladjustment symptoms were four times as frequent among the poor readers as among the good ones. "There were twice as many maladjusted poor readers, who were twice as maladjusted as the good readers."

Less than one-fourth of the good readers showed any maladjustment symptoms, with only one serious problem in this group, while about one-half of the poor readers showed such symptoms. Nine poor readers were far more maladjusted than any of the good readers; six of these were "extremely maladjusted."

In the group of 30 retarded readers studied, there were only five girls, four of these severely maladjusted, however. Only two of the thirteen girls in the good reader group showed a mild degree of maladjustment.

Among the problems listed in the Detroit Adjustment Inventory which were very frequently checked by the poor readers were: lots of colds, late bedtime, going to the movies too often, afraid of school failure, always lonesome, taking more than one's share, forgetting to pay back, no place to play, parents too strict, and breaking windows and running away.

Among the conclusions listed by the investigator as the result of this study are: There are more introverts among poor readers than among good readers. Poor readers are less ethical than good readers, and not well adjusted either in school or community. It is emphasized that no conclusions can be drawn as to what extent these maladjustments are causes of poor reading.

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

WILLIAM S. GRAY

During the last two months your President, with excellent cooperation from the Program Committee, has given much time and effort to the development of the program for the annual meeting in May. An over-view of the program appears elsewhere in this issue. I hope that it appeals to you and that you plan to attend. The officers and members of the Board of Directors are eager that this, our first annual meeting since the merger, be largely attended. Equally important is vigorous participation in the discussions by all who attend.

To those who did not attend the Atlantic City meeting may I make a brief report of IRA activities there. As announced earlier, the Association did not plan a separate meeting but cooperated with the Program Committee of the AASA in organizing a series of experimental programs relating to reading. The first was a structured panel discussion; the second, a prepared paper followed by a panel discussion; the third, a descriptive and pictorial presentation of the reading program in Wilmington, Delaware, with evaluative comments by a panel; and fourth, a panel discussion of questions from the floor.

These meetings proved to be among the most attractive events of the AASA meeting. Although most of these programs were assigned to large rooms they were filled to overflowing. For example, the first meeting had an attendance of about 900 with at least half that number unable to get in. All of the other meetings also proved to be far more popular than the rooms were spacious. Publicity material relating to IRA was distributed at each meeting with the result that our Association became far more widely known than previously.

The Board of Directors met on Sunday, February 18, in Atlantic City for an all-day session. The Secretary-Treasurer gave the encouraging report that more than 5000 had paid dues since January first for the current half year with about 2500 still to be heard from. It is hoped that the membership will go beyond 7000 soon.

The discussion of the Board of Directors centered largely on problems relating to the organization and function of local and intermediate councils. Our Association is growing so rapidly that types of organization and procedures which were adequate formerly will not serve our needs today. Special committees are actively at work upon these problems and it is hoped that important proposals can be presented to the Assembly at its annual meeting in Chicago. Plans are also under way to prepare a bulletin which will serve as a guide to councils in organizing and carrying on their activities effectively. It is hoped that representatives from all councils will attend the forthcoming Assembly meeting and contribute to the formulation of policies and procedures.

This leads me in closing to urge the officers of every council, both local and intermediate, to take steps at once to appoint delegates to the Assembly, if you have not already done so. If the Assembly is to be most successful, every council should be represented.

So, on to the annual meeting and the Assembly.

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## News of Local Reading Councils

• • •

Local Councils are urged to send news of their meetings and plans for the future to Miss Josephine Tronsberg, Reading Laboratory, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh 13, Pennsylvania, who is Local Council Editor.

• • •

The newly formed Manhattan Council has held two open meetings this year. At the October meeting, Dr. Jeanne Chall, College of the City of New York, gave an excellent talk on "The Reading Skills: What? When? How?" At the December meeting, Mrs. Eleanor Cutlar, Reading Coordinator, presented the background of a junior high school reading experiment; Mr. Abraham Cherney presented materials, methods, and techniques used to improve reading ability and social adjustment of a seventh grade with average and above average intelligence, but retarded in reading several years. The meetings were well attended and proved to be of great benefit to all.

The Fairview Elementary School was host to the El Dorado Council No. 2 at its December meeting. The members separated into three groups for a lively discussion on "Emotional Factors as They Relate to Creative Reading." One member from each group then reported their findings to the entire group. Tentative plans were made for a reading workshop.

The Painesville Reading Council, Painesville, Ohio, was organized two years ago and includes, in its membership, teachers from first grade through senior high school. The meetings the first year were aimed at knowing their own reading program better. Primary, intermediate, and senior high school

teachers discussed the aims and materials used at each of these levels. The following year, the reading process and factors influencing it was presented by reading specialists from Lake Erie College, Western Reserve University, Kent State University, and Cleveland Public Schools. The council also sponsored a book caravan which was so successful that they have been asked to collaborate in this year's book fair. Funds from this project are being used to secure reading experts for future meetings. Dr. William Sheldon was the speaker for the January meeting.

The Ottawa Chapter, Ottawa, Canada, has had two very successful meetings this year. At the October meeting, Inspector H. A. Christie, of the Ottawa Staff, spoke to two hundred teachers on the topic, "Some Random Observations on the Teaching of Reading in the Ottawa Public Schools." In November, Miss Alice Keenan of Gage and Company conducted a series of three lectures: a demonstration of vocabulary skills followed by the steps in a primary reading lesson: "Child Growth and Development in Reading"; "Skills and Interpretation in the Intermediate Grades". The council expects to have five hundred teachers attend the Spring meeting to hear Bill Martin, the Winston storyteller, talk about "Better Readers Through Storytelling."

The Gerald A. Yoakam Council, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, held a dinner meeting and election of officers in November. Dr. George B. Welsh, Speech Correctionist in Baldwin-Whitehall Public Schools gave an excellent talk on "Speech Difficulties and Reading Problems." The January meeting was held in conjunction with the International Council of Exceptional Children. The program was designed to acquaint all interested parties with the University of Pittsburgh's offerings in teacher training for Special Education. Dr. Donald Cleland was the moderator for the symposium in which specialists in the edu-

cation of the blind, the deaf, the mentally retarded, and the speech handicapped were participants.

The Midwest City Council, Midwest City, Oklahoma, met in October to elect officers and to hand in a problem for discussion at a later meeting. The November meeting featured a demonstration of the Informal Reading Inventory.

The state-wide Oklahoma Council recently became an official department of the Oklahoma Educational Association. In addition to sponsoring workshops where teachers can get help on methods and techniques, the council offers a consultant service, sending its leaders into individual school systems to assist with reading conferences or to organize a local council.

The Welland, St. Catherine, and Niagara Councils held a joint meeting in February. Three hundred teachers heard Miss Gwen Horsman, Supervisor of High School Reading for the Detroit Schools, discuss some fundamental principles of teaching reading. After a mid-morning coffee break and short musical program, Miss Horsman discussed the teaching of basic reading skills in a second lecture.

The Illinois State Normal University Reading Council met in February to hear a panel discussion on the question, "How Much Phonics in Grade One." Two first-grade teachers described the phonics instruction given in their classes and displayed material. In the discussion period, many questions were raised regarding the intensive phonics programs adopted by some schools in that area. The council, which now has thirty-one members, held a dinner meeting in March.

The Magnolia Reading Council, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, sponsored a reading meeting at the Mississippi Education Association Convention in March. The principal speakers, Miss Mabel Collette and Mr. Thomas Landry, both of the State Department of Education in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, discussed problems in

primary and intermediate reading. The next meeting of the Magnolia Council will be held during the sixteenth Annual Reading Conference at Mississippi Southern College June 14. It will be a dinner meeting and a well-known speaker will participate.

About four hundred people attended a Language Arts Work Conference sponsored by the Kanawha County Council, Charleston, West Virginia, in February. Dr. Ruth Strickland, the principal speaker, discussed "A Developmental Program for the Language Arts." A panel discussion on "Problems We Face in the Language Arts," was followed by a general discussion. A luncheon at which Dr. Strickland spoke on "Bridging Gaps in the Language Arts Program," followed by an Invocation and special music, completed the program.

The Brooklyn Council, New York, heard Dr. Nancy Lerrick talk about "Enriching Your Teaching with Children's Books" at their February afternoon meeting before which coffee was served. A demonstration entitled "The Book + Audio + Visual" was included in the program.

The Central New Jersey Council, Somerville, New Jersey, has been centering their programs around workshops that have grown out of the needs of the group. Such topics as new textbooks, the telebinocular, informal reading tests, etc., have been discussed. They have formed a professional book exchange with each one buying a book and exchanging it for another every month. One meeting a year is used for discussions and reports on Reading Institutes attended by members.

The North Jersey Council, New Jersey, held its first open meeting of the year in November. The members had concentrated on increasing the member-

ship which rose from eight to thirty-four members. The program was a social meeting with informal discussions on reading problems, especially those of the slow reader. At their January meeting the topic for discussion was "The Relationship of Emotional Disturbances to Reading Problems." The speakers were Mrs. Ethelyn Murphy, director of Child Study Department in Englewood Public Schools; Miss Emma Stein, school psychologist in Dumont; and Miss Winifred Cross from the Educational Clinic in Teaneck, New Jersey. A question and answer period followed.

Western Michigan College Council, Kalamazoo, Michigan, holds a dinner meeting every month from October through May. At the April meeting, "The Teaching of Reading Through the Use of Visual Aids" will be the topic for discussion. In May the council will consider "Questions Asked by Parents Concerning the Teaching of Reading."

Kent Council members, Kent, Ohio, are eagerly anticipating their April meeting when Bill Martin, Winston Company, will discuss "Story Telling." The May meeting will be a dinner meeting at which "Clarifying Current Practices in the Teaching of Reading" and "Looking at IRA" will be the subjects for discussion.

"Reading as an Aspect of the Language Arts" was the theme for the March meeting of the San Diego, California, Council. Mrs. Marguerite A. Brydegaard, San Diego State College, discussed "Creative Writing and the Reading Program." Dr. Thorsten R. Carlson, also of San Diego State College, then discussed "The Reading Program and Spelling." The April meeting will be devoted to "Research Studies" and "A Demonstration of Audio-Visual Aids in Reading."

## FIRST ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION CHICAGO, MAY 11-12

The International Reading Association will hold its first annual meeting at the Morrison Hotel in Chicago, May 11-12. Classroom teachers, remedial teachers and clinicians, principals, supervisors, reading coordinators, curriculum specialists, superintendents of schools; college students, college teachers of reading, parents and others interested in the improvement of reading are very cordially invited to attend. The program has been planned to serve two important purposes.

It seeks first of all to come to grips with many of the most challenging problems and controversial issues faced today in efforts to improve reading. The central theme of the program is *Better Readers for Our Times*. General sessions will define the nature of the problems faced and will identify basic principles underlying their solution. Special sections will apply these principles to the specific problems met by teachers and school officers at various levels from the kindergarten to college. The proposals made by speakers will be considered carefully by discussants and other conferees. Through the sharing of experiences and the pooling of judgments it is hoped that a clearer understanding of current issues will be secured and a broad foundation laid for the improvement of reading in all its aspects.

A second purpose of the meeting is to provide opportunity to discuss the challenging opportunities and problems faced by the Association. Through proposals to be made at the luncheon meeting on May 12 and through discussions to be carried on in the Assembly by representatives of local and intermediate councils it is hoped that plans can be developed for an era of notable service on the part of the Association. An outline of the program follows.

### Friday A.M., May 11—General Session

"The Role of Reading in Developing Today's Children and Youth", *Nila B. Smith*, School of Education and Director, The Reading Institute, New York University.  
"The Demand That Current Life Makes on Its Readers", *John J. DeBoer*, School of Education, University of Illinois

### Sectional Meetings

"Nature and Scope of Reading Programs Adapted to Today's Needs"

1. In the Primary Grades, *Gertrude H. Hildreth*, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, N. Y.  
Discussants: *Althea Beery*, Supervisor, Elementary Education, Cincinnati, O.  
*Kathleen B. Hester*, Michigan State Normal College, Ypsilanti, Michigan
2. In the Middle Grades, *Helen Huus*, School of Education, University of Pennsylvania  
Discussants: *Eleanor Johnson*, Director of School Services, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut  
*Mary Shaw*, Principal, Willard School, Evanston, Illinois
3. In the Upper Grades and Junior High School, *William D. Sheldon*, Director, Reading Laboratory, Syracuse University  
Discussants: *Edwin H. Colbath*, Curriculum Coordinator, Junior High Schools, Board of Education, City of New York  
*Mildred C. Letton*, Department of Education, University of Chicago

4. In Senior High Schools, *Isabelle Kincheloe*, English Department, Chicago Teachers College  
 Discussants: *David L. Shepherd*, Secondary Reading Consultant, Public Schools, Norwalk, Connecticut  
*Phyllis Bland*, English Department, Evanston High School, Evanston, Illinois
5. In Colleges, *Mark Ashin*, The College, The University of Chicago  
 Discussants: *Edgar L. DeForest*, Director, Reading Improvement Services, Michigan State College  
*Donald L. Cleland*, Director, Reading Laboratory, University of Pittsburgh
6. In Grades Kindergarten—XII (for Administrative and Supervisory Officers),  
*LaVerne Strong*, Curriculum Consultant, State Department of Education, Hartford, Connecticut  
 Discussants: *Amelia Traenkenschuh*, Assistant Superintendent in Charge of Curriculum and Instruction, Rock Island, Illinois  
*Inez Gingerich*, Director, Elementary Education, Enid, Oklahoma

#### Friday Afternoon, May 11—General Session

"Progress Achieved Thus Far in Developing Better Readers", *Mary C. Austin*, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University  
 "Challenging Problems Still to Be Faced", *Luella B. Cook*, President, National Council of Teachers of English

#### Sectional Meetings

##### "Controversial Issues and Unsolved Problems"

1. "The Need for and Nature of a Reading Readiness Program", *Aileen C. Norton*, Principal, Jonathan Burr School, Chicago  
 Discussants: *Edith Jay*, Psychology Department, Wayne University  
*Lillian Paulkner*, Elementary Supervisor, Milwaukee Public Schools
2. "Grouping and Promotion in Relation to Progress in Reading", *Albert J. Harris*, Educational Clinic, Queens College, New York  
 Discussants: *Margaret A. Robinson*, Principal, Pauline Avenue School, Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
*C. H. Pygman*, Superintendent of Schools, Maywood, Illinois
3. "When and How Word Attack Skills Should Be Taught", *A. S. Artley*, Director, Child Study Clinic, University of Missouri  
 Discussants: *Lillian Fletcher*, Child Study Department, Board of Education, Chicago  
*Ethel S. Maney*, Reading Consultant, Delaware County, Media, Pennsylvania
4. "Providing Reading Materials Appropriate to Interest and Maturity Levels," *Ruth Strang*, Teachers College, Columbia University  
 Discussants: *Jeanne Chall*, Educational Clinic, The City College, New York  
*Lillian M. Hinds*, Reading Supervisor, Public Schools, Euclid, Ohio
5. "Responsibility for and Methods of Promoting Growth in Reading in Content Fields", *Leo Fay*, School of Education, Indiana University  
 Discussants: *Dorothy Kendall Bracken*, Director, Reading Clinic, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas

George Mallinson, Director of Graduate Studies, Western Michigan College, Kalamazoo, Michigan

6. "Developing Higher Levels of Reading Competence," Arthur I. Gates, Teachers College, Columbia University

Discussants: Dorothy Lampard, Department of Education, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta

Joseph Mersand, Chairman, English Department, Jamaica High School, New York City

7. "How Can We Secure Parent Cooperation?" Nancy Lerrick, Education Director, Random House Children's Books, New York

Discussants: Jewell Askew, President, Texas Reading Association, Houston, Texas

Charlemae Rollins, Children's Librarian, Chicago Public Library

8. "Improving the Quality of Reading Instruction Throughout the Grades and High School" (for Administrative and Supervisory Officers), Earle W. Wiltse, Superintendent, Grand Island, Nebraska

Discussants: Thaddeus Lubera, Associate Superintendent in Charge of Instruction (North Division), Chicago

Algard Whitney, School of Education, University of Illinois

4:15—5:30 P.M.

Reception for officers, members of the Board of Directors of I.R.A. and all attending the meeting, by the officers and members of the Chicago Council

### Friday Evening, May 11

"Can Television Aid in Teaching Reading?"

"Why Television is Being Considered as an Aid in Teaching", Alfred Beattie, Superintendent of Schools, Allegheny County, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

"The Preparation of Telecasts for Use in Basal Reading Instruction", Rhea Sikes, Producer of Total Teaching Demonstration, WQED, Metropolitan Pittsburgh Educational Station, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

"The Kinescopic Presentation of a Lesson", Stella Nardoza, Television Teacher of Total Teaching Demonstration, WQED, Metropolitan Pittsburgh Educational Station, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

"The Values or Effects, as Observed in Classrooms", Margaret McKee, Assistant Superintendent, Allegheny County Schools, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

### Saturday Morning, May 12—General Session

"Why Many Children and Youth Are Retarded in Reading", Anne McKillop, Teachers College, Columbia University

### Sectional Meetings

"Classroom Methods in Identifying and Diagnosing the Needs of Retarded Readers"

1. In Elementary Schools, Katherine E. Torrant, Reading Consultant, Newton Public Schools, Newton, Massachusetts

Discussants: Josephine A. Piekarsz, Director, Reading Clinic, University of South Carolina

Anne E. Price, General Consultant, Elementary Schools, St. Louis, Missouri

2. In High Schools and Colleges, George D. Spache, Reading Laboratory and Clinic, University of Florida  
 Discussants: Marvin D. Glock, School of Education, Cornell University  
 Frances Triggs, Chairman, Committee on Diagnostic Reading Tests, New York  
 "Classroom Methods in Correcting Reading Deficiencies"  
 1. In Elementary Schools, Sister M. Julitta, O.S.F., Director, Reading Clinic, Cardinal Stritch College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
 Discussants: E. Elona Sochor, Director of Reading Clinic, Temple University  
 Grace Walby, Child Guidance Clinic, Winnipeg, Canada  
 2. In High Schools and Colleges, Elizabeth A. Simpson, Director, Reading Service, Institute for Psychological Services, Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago  
 Discussants: Phillip Shaw, Supervisor of the Reading and Study Program, Brooklyn College  
 H. Alan Robinson, District Coordinator of Reading Services, Central High School, Valley Stream, New York  
 "Improving the Reading Ability of Gifted Pupils", Paul Witty, School of Education, Northwestern University  
 Discussants: Miriam Morton, Provincial Normal School, Winnipeg, Canada  
 Dorothy C. Estabrook, Jane Stenson School, Skokie, Illinois  
 "Clinical Procedures in Diagnosing Seriously Retarded Readers", Helen Robinson, Department of Education, University of Chicago  
 Discussants: Muriel Potter Langman, Michigan State Normal College, Ypsilanti, Michigan  
 Ullin Leavell, Director, McGuffey Reading Clinic, University of Virginia

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"Remedial Procedures for Seriously Retarded Readers", *Ralph C. Staiger, Director, Reading Clinic, Mississippi Southern College, Hattiesburg, Mississippi*

Discussants: *Ruth H. Solomon, Director, Albany Center for Learning Disabilities, Albany, New York*

*Marion Kingsbury, Director, Remedial Education Center, Washington, D. C.*

"Administrative Steps in Providing for Retarded Readers", *Paul Misner, Superintendent of Schools, Glencoe, Illinois, and President, American Association of School Administrators*

Discussants: *Lucille Berkel, Principal, Madison School, St. Louis, Mo.*

*William Edward Dolch, Emeritus Professor of Education, University of Illinois*

#### **Luncheon Meeting**

"The Role and Challenge of IRA", *William S. Gray, President*

"The Organization and Direction of Councils", *Mary C. Austin, Harvard University*

"Vitalizing Council Programs and Activities", *William D. Sheldon, Syracuse University*

(Annual Meeting of Board of Representatives will follow the luncheon)

#### **Saturday P.M.—Sectional Meetings**

"How the Conference Proposals Can Be Implemented"

1. In the Primary Grades

Leader: *Margaret McKim, Teachers College, University of Cincinnati*

2. In the Middle Grades

Leader: *Gertrude Whipple, Wayne University and Supervisor of Language Arts, Detroit Public Schools*

3. In the Upper Grades and Junior High School

Leader: *Nancy Young, Curriculum Consultant, Bureau of Curriculum, Board of Education, City of New York*

4. In Senior High Schools

Leader: *Lou LaBrant, School of Education, University of Kansas City*

5. In Colleges

Leader: *James M. McCallister, Dean, Woodrow Wilson Branch, Chicago City Junior College*

6. Throughout School Systems

Leader: *Dorothy E. Cooke, Supervisor of Elementary Education, The State Education Department, Albany, New York*

Directions for registering for the meeting were forwarded by mail to all members early in April. Others may make application to Dr. Donald L. Cleland, Executive Secretary of IRA, Reading Laboratory, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Registration fee for members is \$2.00 and for all others, \$4.00. Those planning to attend are advised to register and to make hotel reservations in advance.

*To Superintendents.* The officers of the International Reading Association hope that you will find it possible to attend this meeting. Special sections have been organized for the discussion of those problems in which administrative and supervisory officers are vitally concerned. There will also be numerous exhibits of recent materials relating to reading as well as other pertinent aids to learning. We particularly urge that you make it possible for several of your teachers to attend.



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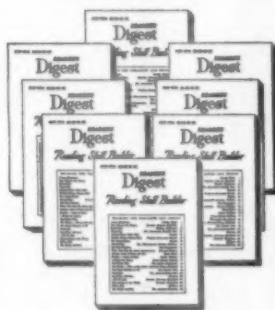


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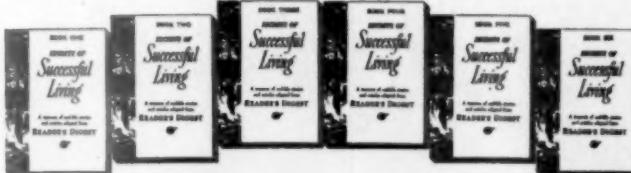
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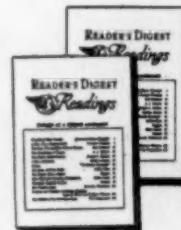


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